

Trump Cancels Israel Visit After Uproar



Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump speaks at a rally, in Las Vegas. A planned visit to Israel by U.S. Republican hopeful Donald Trump is turning into one big headache for Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. The Israeli leader, widely seen as a supporter of the Republican Party, shares much in common with Trump. But cozying up to the GOP front-runner risks is fraught with risks, particularly after his controversial calls to bar Muslims from entering the U.S. and comments to a Jewish group that some said bordered on anti-Semitic.

(AP Photo/John Locher)

JOSEF FEDERMAN
Associated Press

JERUSALEM (AP) — GOP presidential front-runner Donald Trump canceled plans Thursday to visit Israel, a trip for which even Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu — widely seen as an ally of the Republican Party — had shown little enthusiasm.

Trump announced his decision on Twitter, saying he would reschedule "at a later date after I become

President of the U.S." Appearing on Fox News, he said there were many reasons for the move, among them that he didn't want to put Netanyahu in a bind.

"In fact, I did a campaign ad for him, and he's a good man, but I didn't want to put him under pressure," Trump said. "I also did it because I'm in the midst of a powerful campaign that's going very well."

Trump, who has maintained a wide lead in most

early preference polling, unleashed an uproar this week when he called for a temporary ban on Muslims entering the U.S. The billionaire businessman has cast the idea as a prudent step in the wake of the mass shooting by an Islamic militant couple of 14 people in San Bernardino, California, while critics call it both racist and unconstitutional.

Trump also drew criticism from some American Jews for his comments last week

to a gathering of Jewish donors. He was booed after refusing to endorse Jerusalem as the undivided capital of Israel — a key Israeli position. Some of his other comments were seen by some as promoting Jewish stereotypes.

White House spokesman Josh Earnest said at a briefing that "most people are relieved that he's reconsidered" the visit to Israel.

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US keeps wraps on new force for Iraq

ROBERT BURNS

AP National Security Writer
WASHINGTON (AP) — The commando force that President Barack Obama is dispatching to Iraq to conduct clandestine raids against the Islamic State group does not fit neatly into a picture of the U.S. military strategy for defeating the extremist army.

Even the name — “specialized expeditionary targeting force” — is a bit of a riddle.

The main point is that the force is intended to ratch-

troops to Syria as trainers and advisers.

The Pentagon has been spare in its description of this new commando force in Iraq.

It has not even said when it will deploy.

Offered a chance by the Senate Armed Services Committee on Wednesday to expand on the Pentagon's cryptic outline of the force's makeup and mission, Defense Secretary Ash Carter demurred.

In fact he said less about it than when he announced

be classified secret. In this case the Pentagon lifted that veil to bolster its argument that the U.S. military strategy is building momentum at a time when its critics claim the Islamic State is winning.

Obama alluded to the new commando force when he said in an Oval Office address Sunday that thousands of Iraqi and Syrian ground forces are trying to retake territory from IS and that U.S. special operations forces are being deployed to “accelerate that of-



Defense Secretary Ash Carter, accompanied by Joints Chiefs Vice Chairman Gen. Paul Selva, testifies on Capitol Hill in Washington, before the Senate Armed Service Committee. Carter said the U.S. is prepared to assist the Iraqi army with more personnel and equipment to help them fight Islamic State militants.

(AP Photo/Pablo Martinez Monsivais)

et up pressure on Islamic State militants by using a small group of special operations troops — possibly fewer than 100 — to more aggressively use intelligence information, including capturing and killing the group's leaders. In theory, this would generate even more and better intelligence, feeding what the military calls a “virtuous cycle” of intelligence-driven air and ground operations. It will be combat, but on a relatively small scale. Obama remains opposed to major U.S. ground combat in Iraq or Syria. Several weeks ago the administration said it would send up to 50 special operations

the move a week ago. He said then that the force would be positioned to gather intelligence, conduct raids and free hostages in Iraq while partnered with Iraqi forces. He also said it could conduct unilateral hit-and-run raids into Syria.

But Carter told the committee that he preferred to keep details under wraps.

“This is a no-kidding force that will be doing important things,” he said, adding that describing it too fully would jeopardize its security.

This kind of military force typically works in the shadows; the very fact of its existence normally would

be classified secret. He didn't go into details, and other officials say the Pentagon has yet to fully develop what was little more than a concept when Carter announced it last week.

Some private analysts are skeptical that adding 100 more special operations troops in Iraq will make a significant difference.

Anthony Cordesman, a long-time Middle East defense expert at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, says the commando force could be helpful if used as part of a broader U.S. strategy for developing effective local ground forces in both Syria and Iraq. □

Syria opposition groups set up framework for proposed talks

A. AL-SHIHRI

ZEINA KARAM

Associated Press

RIYADH, Saudi Arabia (AP) — A powerful Syrian insurgent faction pulled out of an opposition conference on Thursday in protest over the role given to groups it said are close to the Syrian government, signaling continued divisions among rival factions ahead of proposed peace negotiations with President Bashar Assad's government.

Ahrar al-Sham, a Saudi-backed ultraconservative group that operates mainly in northern Syria, said in a statement that it was withdrawing also because the conference failed to “confirm the Muslim identity of our people.”

The group's withdrawal came at the end of the two-day conference in the Saudi Arabian capital, Riyadh, which sought to form a unified opposition front ahead of the proposed talks for ending Syria's nearly five-year conflict.

Two opposition members said participants at the meeting agreed on a framework that would guide the proposed talks. They established a “supreme council” made up of 32 opposition members and representatives of rebel factions that would later pick the 15 people who would negotiate on behalf of the opposition. A senior member of the Syrian National Coalition, a Western-backed opposition group, told AP that most participants agreed on its vision for a civil, democratic Syria and a transitional government that would respect human rights and the territorial integrity of Syria. Participants also agreed on the need to safeguard state institutions while restructuring the security forces.

Although Western leaders have recently said Assad can stay on as part of a transition for an unspecified time, SNC and other participants at the Riyadh meeting insisted he cannot be part of a transitional government.

U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry welcomed the “positive outcome” of the gathering in Riyadh where an “extremely diverse group of Syrians put aside differences in the interest of building a new Syria.”

“While this important step forward brings us closer to starting negotiations between the Syrian parties, we recognize the difficult work ahead,” he added.

The stakes were high for the Riyadh meeting, during which the disparate and often competing opposition factions were held to a tight deadline to agree on the outlines of a political solution to the crisis and choose representatives for the talks.

Security was exceptionally tight at the hotel venue in the Saudi capital Thursday. The entrance was blocked by armored vehicles and watched by snipers. Security guards and police kept visitors out of the hotel.

Kerry, in separate statements earlier, told reporters that he had spoken to Saudi Foreign Minister Adel al-Jubeir and Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov to organize the next Syria meeting, tentatively set for Dec. 18 at the United Nations headquarters in New York. A peace plan agreed to last month by world powers meeting in Vienna set a Jan. 1 deadline for the start of talks between Assad's government and opposition groups.

Although there was agreement on a framework for negotiation, the withdrawal of Ahrar al-Sham, whose founders are linked to al-Qaida, underscored the difficulties that lie ahead as groups with competing ideologies try to forge a common vision for the future.

Divisions remain over whether Assad could be part of a political transition although most participants agree he should step down at the start of the transitional period, said Omar Mushaweh, a senior Muslim Brotherhood member whose party is represented at the meeting. □

Bergdahl says he left base to expose 'leadership failure'

REBECCA BOONE

Associated Press

BOISE, Idaho (AP) — Sgt. Bowe Bergdahl says he walked off his base in Afghanistan to cause a crisis that would catch the attention of military brass.

He wanted to warn them about what he believed were serious problems with leadership in his unit. And he wanted to prove himself as a real-life action hero, like someone out of a movie. Bergdahl hasn't spoken

publicly about his decision or his subsequent five-year imprisonment by the Taliban and the prisoner swap that secured his return to the United States. But over the past several months he spoke extensively with screenwriter Mark Boal, who shared about 25 hours of the recorded interviews with Sarah Koenig for her popular podcast, "Serial."

"As a private first-class, nobody is going to listen to me," Bergdahl says in the

first episode of the podcast, released Thursday. "No one is going to take me serious that an investigation needs to be put underway."

Bergdahl, of Hailey, Idaho, was charged in March with desertion and misbehavior before the enemy. He faces up to life in prison, though an Army officer has recommended that Bergdahl's case be moved to a special misdemeanor-level military court.

His attorney Eugene Fidell

says politicians and would-be politicians have been using Bergdahl as a talking point to push their own agendas for months, a situation he described as creating "gale-force political winds." The more the public can hear Bergdahl's own words, the better, Fidell told The Associated Press.

"Some of the information that is going to come out is inevitably not going to be what we would have preferred in a perfect universe,

but net-net, we'll take it and allow people in our democratic society to form their own opinions," Fidell said.

Bergdahl's interview is another coup for makers of "Serial," which established podcasts as a viable outlet when the first season was downloaded more than 100 million times. Makers wouldn't say how long the new season would last; the first one was 12 separate episodes. □

Cruz defends dictators, NSA limits in security speech

STEVE PEOPLES

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Republican presidential contender Ted Cruz on Thursday defended Middle East dictators as useful allies against Islamic extremists during a Washington address decrying political correctness and stricter gun laws as an impediment to national security.

The first-term Texas senator described "America under attack" in remarks at a conservative think tank that spanned nearly an hour. He broke no new ground, but reinforced his view that global security depends upon an aggressive and engaged America — with distinct limits. The tea party firebrand did not call for additional U.S. ground troops to confront the Islamic State group in Iraq and Syria, preferring instead to intensify the U.S.-led air campaign and arm regional allies.

And repeating policy pre-

scriptions outlined during an Associated Press interview last week, he lashed out at foreign policy hawks in both parties who helped ouster dictators in Egypt, Libya and Iraq and now have the same policy for Syria.

"We've seen the catastrophic results of these myopic policies," he charged. "We will not win by replacing dictators, as unpleasant as they may be, with terrorists who want to kill us and destroy America."

Foreign policy and national security have emerged as a central focus in the 2016 presidential campaign following recent terrorist attacks in Paris and California.

Cruz cited border security as a key national security priority, suggesting that violent extremists could easily enter the country simply by swimming across the Rio Grande River. There are no publicly disclosed examples of a known terrorist



Republican presidential candidate Sen. Ted Cruz, R-Texas speaks at the Heritage Foundation in Washington, Thursday, Dec. 10, 2015.

(AP Photo/Pablo Martinez Monsivais)

caught trying to cross the U.S.-Mexican border.

"Border security is national security," Cruz said.

He also lashed out at Presi-

dent Obama and others for favoring gun control measures to help address the explosion of mass shootings in America.

"We don't stop the bad guys by giving way our guns," Cruz said. "We stop the bad guys by using our guns." □

Scalia draws rebukes for comments about black students

SAM HANANEL

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — U.S. Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia, famous for his blustery rhetoric from the bench and beyond, finds himself in controversy again after suggesting that some black students might belong at "slower-track" universities.

His remarks Wednesday during court arguments over an affirmative action program at the University

of Texas have drawn rebukes from civil rights leaders, top Democrats and even the White House. And they returned a familiar spotlight to the feisty justice who doesn't shy away from calling it as he sees it on issues like race and gay marriage. Scalia has a long history of making remarks in blunt terms without seeming to care about offending those in his sights, reflecting the sensibilities of a staunch conservative born

in the 1930s who came of age as the civil rights movement was beginning.

Senate Democratic leader Harry Reid denounced Scalia on Thursday for uttering what he called "racist ideas" from the bench.

"The idea that African-American students are somehow inherently intellectually inferior from other students is despicable," Reid said on the Senate floor. "It's a throwback ... to a time that America left

behind a half a century ago."

White House spokesman Josh Earnest said the comments stand in "quite stark contrast" to the priorities and values President Barack Obama has advocated through his career. Civil rights activist Al Sharpton, who attended the arguments, said he didn't know "if I was in the courtroom at the United States Supreme Court or at a Donald Trump rally."

Wednesday's arguments were about whether the University of Texas has compelling reasons to consider race among other factors when it evaluates applicants for about a quarter of its freshman class.

Gregory Garre, the university's lawyer, told Scalia that minority students admitted through the affirmative action program fared better over time than those admitted from the top 10 percent of all schools. □

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Trump cancels Israel visit after uproar over his comments

Continued from front

"The situation in Israel is particularly volatile, and so I think in this case, his decision to reconsider that trip is a good outcome for all of those involved," Earnest added.

From the day he launched his candidacy, Trump's campaign has been driven by one controversy after the next. There was his assertion that that Mexican government was sending its rapists and criminals across the border; his statement that Sen. John McCain wasn't a war hero because he was captured; his feud with Fox News anchor Megyn Kelly; a series of factually inaccurate remarks; and the time he called Iowa voters stupid. Each time, Trump's comments have drawn fury from his opponents and prompted pundits to predict his pending demise. But each time, Trump has emerged unscathed.

It remains unclear whether his proposal on Muslim immigration will have any long-lasting impact on his campaign. But overseas, the Israel trip is just one of many casualties.

A visit to Israel is considered a rite of passage for U.S. presidential candidates as they seek to burnish their foreign policy credentials and appeal to Jewish American voters, and Netanyahu has hosted scores of candidates and elected American officials over the years.

During the current campaign, Trump's Republican rivals have questioned his

foreign policy bona fides, suggesting he lacks the depth and diplomatic skill to tackle crises in the Middle East and elsewhere. Trump has argued his vast experience brokering business

with Republican positions on economic and security issues, would have welcomed Trump. Like the other Republican candidates, Trump — whose daughter, Ivanka, converted to Juda-

lim.

Early this year, Netanyahu was harshly criticized when he warned that Arabs were voting "in droves" as he made an urgent election-day plea to supporters to

comments and to cancel the meeting unless the American retracts them. Some 37 lawmakers, nearly a third of the parliament, signed the petition.

In a statement Wednesday, Netanyahu rejected Trump's comments about Muslims, saying Israel "respects all religions." Although he had said he would go ahead with the Dec. 28 meeting, he stressed it did not amount to an endorsement of Trump.

An Israeli official, speaking on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to discuss the matter with the media, said there had been no Israeli pressure on Trump to cancel. Likewise, Marc Zell, co-chairman of Republicans Overseas Israel, said there was "none whatsoever" from his organization, which represents Republican supporters among the country's large American expatriate community.

"He's welcome to visit Israel, but I think it's better that he didn't come because his visit here would have been marred by a loud dissenting voice coming from all sectors of the population, including me," Zell said.

"I don't believe he's capable of being the president of the United States because I think he lacks good judgment," he added, stressing that he was voicing a personal opinion. Palestinian officials said there were no plans for Trump to meet with them, and they welcomed news of his cancellation. □



Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump greets supporters before he delivers his message during a campaign rally at the state fair in Oklahoma City. Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Wednesday, Dec. 9, 2015, rejected Trump's recent statements about Muslims, saying Israel "respects all religions" as he faced calls to call off an upcoming visit by the Republican front-runner.

(AP Photo/J Pat Carter)

deals qualifies him to negotiate with foreign leaders, and he has cited the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as a prime example.

In an interview with The Associated Press last week, Trump said of potentially brokering a peace deal in the Middle East, "If you can make that deal, you can make any deal. It's probably the toughest deal to make." In normal circumstances, Netanyahu, who thrives in the public limelight and tends to agree

ism — has long worked to portray himself as a strong supporter of Israel.

But Trump's comments about Muslims had put the Israeli leader in a bind.

Throughout a three-decade political career, Netanyahu has been a leading voice warning of the dangers of Islamic extremism. Yet he has tried to be careful about differentiating between Islamic extremists and the Muslim religion. Nearly 20 percent of Israel's population is Mus-

go to the polls.

Those comments remain fresh in the minds of Israeli Arabs, and cozying up to Trump would have risked drawing renewed accusations of racism, particularly if the outspoken real estate mogul and reality TV star managed to offend Muslims.

Opposition lawmaker Michal Rozin of the dovish Meretz party on Wednesday initiated a petition urging Netanyahu to condemn Trump's "racist"



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Gun buyer, gunman linked by marriage, possible previous plot



Members of the FBI Underwater Search and Evidence Response Team work in Seccombe Lake on Thursday, Dec. 10, 2015 in San Bernardino, Calif.

(Micah Escamilla/The Sun via AP)

AMY TAXIN
BRIAN MELLEY
Associated Press
RIVERSIDE, California (AP)

— The gunman who killed his co-workers in San Bernardino and the friend who bought the assault rifles used in the shooting were related through marriage and may have plotted an attack together three years ago.

New revelations from officials and public records show a much deeper connection between Syed Rizwan Farook and Enrique Marquez than previously was disclosed. Marquez has not been charged with a crime.

Marquez purchased high-powered weapons at least three years ago that Farook and his wife used to open fire on a holiday gathering of Farook's fellow health inspectors Dec. 2, killing 14 people. Farook, 28, and his wife, Tashfeen Malik, 29, were killed hours later in a shootout with police, leaving behind a 6-month-old

daughter.

An FBI dive team on Thursday searched a small, urban lake about 3 miles north of the shooting site, though it was unclear what they were looking for. The search is related to the investigation into the massacre, according to a law enforcement official who was briefed on the investigation but was not authorized to speak publicly.

FBI Director James Comey told the Senate Judiciary Committee a day earlier that the two shooters were radicalized well before Malik came to the U.S. on a fiancée visa and they had discussed jihad and martyrdom as early as 2013.

The bureau has said that Malik declared her allegiance to the Islamic State group in a Facebook posting shortly before the attack.

Investigators are trying to determine if Farook's path toward extremism predated 2013 and whether it led to plans to launch an at-

tack in 2012, according to two people familiar with the investigation who were not authorized to discuss the matter publicly and spoke on condition of anonymity.

Marquez and Farook "were plotting an actual attack" that year, including buying weapons, but became apprehensive and shelved the plan because of law enforcement activity and arrests in the area, said Idaho Sen. Jim Risch, a Republican who sits on the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence. Marquez, 24, spoke with federal authorities after they raided his mother's Riverside house over the weekend. He and Farook were friends for years and became family last year with a sister-in-law in common.

The two men were listed as witnesses on the marriage license when Farook's brother, Raheel, wed a Russian woman in 2011.

Three years later, Raheel Farook and his wife, Ta-

tiana, were witnesses to Marquez's marriage to her sister, Mariya Chernykh, according to Riverside County records.

The ceremony took place at the Islamic Society of Corona-Norco, according to the marriage license, though the mosque's facility manager denied it occurred there.

Azmi Hasan said Wednesday that he understood Marquez had converted to

Islam but said he was not a member of that mosque. Marquez had only worshipped there three to four times over seven years, said Hasan, who had not seen him in about four years.

Marquez had a security guard license in California for several years, but it expired last year. He had worked at Wal-Mart since May but has since been fired, spokesman Brian Nick said. □



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American Living: Vermont farmers create 'unicorn of self-published books'



John Churchman feeds sheep in his barnyard in Essex, Vt. What started out as a vividly photographed self-published children's book by John and Jennifer Churchman is hitting it big in the publishing world just in time for Christmas. (AP Photo/Wilson Ring)

WILSON RING
Associated Press

ESSEX, Vt. (AP) — This is the story of how an injured lamb named Sweet Pea started a war. Well, a bidding war.

About a year ago, John and Jennifer Churchman's border collie, Laddie, found that one of their lambs had hurt a leg in the barn on the Vermont farm where they keep sheep, ducks and geese.

John Churchman called a veterinarian and kept the

couple's Facebook group up to date on Sweet Pea's recovery. Online supporters urged a celebration. Giving in to whimsy, the Churchmans dressed their animals up in hats and leis, and fed them delicacies like pumpkin slices.

Through the process, John Churchman took photos of the animals, the sun and ice patterns — all images that formed the illustrations for "Sweet Pea & Friends: The SheepOver," a children's book they

initially self-published with support and suggestions from online followers. They used a crowdfunding campaign to raise the money for a print run of 4,000 books, which has almost sold out.

John Churchman took a copy to The Flying Pig Bookstore in nearby Shelburne and sold three books while showing it to owner Elizabeth Bluemle, who ordinarily turns down self-published books.

The next day she wrote

a post that appeared on the Publisher's Weekly ShelfTalker blog. "It was hard not to jump over the counter and pump his hand in congratulations," she wrote.

"This is the unicorn of self-published books because you never find the trifecta of beautiful production, a lovely story and authors who understand what it takes to create a wonderful book that kids love," Bluemle said last week in an interview at her store. "We've gone through cases of this book," she said.

Within days, the Churchmans were represented by New York literary agent Brenda Bowen, who in an earlier job was part of the team at Scholastic Press that acquired the North American rights for the first "Harry Potter" book.

What followed was a bidding war for Sweet Pea's story among five major publishing houses. Now the Churchmans have a generous six-figure advance; the story of Sweet Pea, published by Little, Brown Books for Young Readers, is in stores in time for Christmas; and they're working on the second installment of their three-book deal, continuing to tell stories with words and images that are inspired by their animals.

John Churchman is a fine art photographer with a background in painting and graphic design. Jennifer Churchman is a writer with a background in marketing and product branding.

They have dozens of animals on their Essex farm, which they consider models for their photographs. In the process, they get to know their distinct personalities.

"As we watch them every day little story lines unfold and then we pair them with John's images," Jennifer Churchman said. "It just creates this wonderful story, a true story that we think really resonates, especially with children, and many, many adults." □

Chipotle CEO says sorry for ill customers

NEW YORK (AP) — Chipotle founder and co-CEO Steve Ells says he is "deeply sorry" about the customers who were sickened after eating at the chain in recent weeks.

"I'm sorry for the people who got sick. They're having a tough time and I feel terrible about that," Ells said in an interview on NBC's Today show.

Ells repeated the company's pledge to tighten food safety procedures to ensure such incidents do not happen again.

On the same day, Boston College increased the number of students who have reported feeling ill after a group of them ate at Chipotle from 120, to 141. The school said that 12 of those students did not eat at the restaurant. Norovirus can be transmitted by eating contaminated food, or by touching infected surfaces, then putting your fingers in your mouth.

Sales at Chipotle Mexican Grill Inc. have been slammed by high-profile food scares in recent weeks. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has said that at least 52 people in nine states have been sickened in an E. coli outbreak, with 47 of them having eaten at Chipotle. The most recent case happened Nov. 13.

The ingredient that sickened people has not been identified. But Chipotle says whatever the likely culprit was is out of its restaurants. The company has noted the exposure period for the outbreak appears to have passed.

This week students from Boston College, including members of the men's basketball team, reported feeling sick after eating at the chain this past weekend. Chipotle temporarily closed a restaurant where the students said they ate and says it believes the illnesses are an isolated case of norovirus separate from the E. coli outbreak. □



A copy of the book "Sweet Pea & Friends: The SheepOver," sits on a shelf at The Flying Pig bookstore in Shelburne, Vt. The story of Sweet Pea's recovery from a potentially fatal barn ailment was celebrated by the animal's barnmates in a party the Churchmans dubbed a "SheepOver." (AP Photo/Wilson Ring)

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US lawmakers say merger to make megabrewer may cause hangover

MATTHEW DALY

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Castle Danger Brewery in Two Harbors, Minnesota, has been brewing what it calls “dangerously good ales” on the north shore of Lake Superior since 2011. The company outgrew its original home in tiny Castle Danger and now distributes beer to bars and restaurants throughout northern and central Minnesota.

Sen. Amy Klobuchar, a Minnesota Democrat, hails the brewery as an example of the growing craft-beer industry in her state and says she fears that a deal to merge the world’s biggest beer companies into a megabrewer could make it harder for Castle Danger and other small brewers to sell their brands.

Klobuchar and other lawmakers from both parties raised questions at a Senate hearing Tuesday on the proposed \$107 billion takeover by the world’s largest brewer, Anheuser Busch InBev, of rival SABMiller. The combined company would control nearly a third of the global beer market.

“Wholesalers make decisions everyday on what brands to put on their trucks,” Klobuchar said. “By working to ensure those decisions are driven by consumer demand and not producer power, we can help competition in the beer industry remain on tap.” Sen. Chris Coons, a Delaware Democrat, said he worried the merger could harm Delaware-based brewers such as Dogfish Head and 16 Mile.

“Nobody wants to take a seat at a bar and find out that their only options are Bud and Miller,” Coons said. “I’m deeply concerned this merger will squeeze out the small and independent craft brewers in Delaware and across the country at the cost of innovation, consumer choice and jobs.”

Carlos Brito, chief executive of Anheuser Busch InBev, tried to reassure lawmakers, saying the proposed merger was not about squeezing out smaller competitors in the United States, but instead was intended to open markets in Africa, Asia and Central and South America.

Under the deal, the Miller brand would be sold to rival Molson Coors, which would have full control of operations.

The merger “is about bringing more choices to more consumers around the world, including extending the reach of iconic American brands such as Budweiser to new markets,” Brito told a Senate Judiciary subcommittee on antitrust, competition policy and consumer rights.

By selling the popular Miller brand to Molson Coors, the deal ensures that Anheuser Busch InBev’s market share in the U.S. will not change, Brito said.

“If anything, this deal will create an even more competitive landscape in the U.S. by creating a stronger competitor in Molson Coors,” he said. □



North Las Vegas Mayor John Lee displays a copy of a newspaper during a news conference, Thursday, Dec. 10, 2015, in Las Vegas. Lee spoke about the planned \$1 billion manufacturing plant to be built by Chinese-backed electric car maker, Faraday Future, in his city.

(AP Photo/David Becker)

US Financial Front:

Chinese-backed electric carmaker picks Nevada to locate \$1 billion plant

MICHELLE RINDELS

JUSTIN PRITCHARD

Associated Press

CARSON CITY, Nevada

(AP) — Chinese-backed electric carmaker Faraday Future plans to build a \$1 billion manufacturing plant in North Las Vegas, according to a letter the company sent Nevada officials Wednesday.

The upstart, California-based automaker chose Nevada over three other states and after extensive negotiations with Nevada’s economic development team. Its tentative agreement to build the factory is contingent upon the state authorizing major tax incentives.

“I’m excited about the opportunity and I hope it works out,” said Republican Assembly Majority Leader Paul Anderson, who will need to rally legislative support for the deal. “I look forward to working

with people across the board to see if we can get these jobs created.”

The letter to Nevada lawmakers, obtained by The Associated Press, is signed by Jia Yueting (ZHAW’ YOO’-weh-ting), a Chinese billionaire investor who styles himself after Apple’s late Steve Jobs and signed the letter in his capacity as founder and CEO of the holding company LeTV. Faraday hopes to bring a vehicle to market as early as 2017 but has yet to unveil a concept car.

Republican Gov. Brian Sandoval and his top economic development officer are scheduled to attend a news conference in Las Vegas on Thursday that’s expected to include a formal announcement of an agreement to bring the plant to North Las Vegas. Tax incentives to seal the deal would need authorization from Nevada law-

makers, who approved a \$1.3 billion incentive package in a special session last year to secure electric carmaker Tesla Motors’ massive battery factory outside of Reno.

Sandoval, who met with Faraday representatives in China this fall as part of a year of negotiations, would need to summon lawmakers to Carson City for a special session to finalize the agreement.

Faraday has offered few details on its product so far, but has spoken in broad terms about its vision to transform transportation and said it has a diverse funding strategy to bring it to life.

“We plan to revolutionize the automobile industry by creating an integrated, intelligent mobility system that protects the earth and improves the living environment of mankind,” Yueting Jia wrote. □



UN security officers guard the area of the European headquarters of the United Nations in Geneva, Switzerland, Thursday, December 10, 2015. Geneva police were "actively searching" Thursday for suspects in connection with an investigation into the Paris attacks last month, and authorities raised the security alert level in the city and surrounding region, Swiss security officials said. (Salvatore Di Nolfi/Keystone via AP)

Geneva police hunting 4 said to have IS ties

JAMEY KEATEN
Associated Press

GENEVA (AP) — Working on a tip from the CIA, Geneva police were hunting for at least four suspects allegedly linked to the radical Islamic State group and believed to be plotting a "specific" attack in the city, Swiss officials said Thursday.

As city police raised their security alert level, Swiss state prosecutors opened investigations into a suspected criminal plot and suspected violations of a ban into groups like Islamic State and al-Qaida.

The CIA alerted Swiss authorities to the four men on Wednesday, prompting the manhunt, a Swiss official with knowledge of the investigation told The Associated Press on Thursday. He spoke on condition of anonymity because of the sensitivity of the matter.

The official confirmed the suspects were four men shown in a photograph linked to a news report in

Swiss daily Le Matin. They were pictured each in a crouched pose and holding up an index finger — said to be an Islamic State gesture.

It was too early to determine whether other suspects might still be at large, the official said. He also declined to identify the names, ages or nationalities of the people being sought.

The Geneva security department said Swiss national authorities flagged "suspicious individuals" who could be in Geneva or the vicinity to city authorities on Wednesday. It didn't specify how many people were being sought or name them.

The official said, however, the suspects were not believed to have had links to the Paris terror attacks, appearing to revise an earlier statement from the Geneva security department.

Heavily-armed police carrying submachine guns stood guard outside diplo-

matic missions in Geneva on Thursday. Normally, officers carry lighter weapons. Geneva police were also deploying more officers at the city's train station and airport. The U.N. office in Geneva was also increasing its security precautions, even though it said there was no indication of any specific increased threat against U.N. staff.

Police were working with international and national authorities to locate suspects they believed to be in the Geneva region, officials said. "We have gone from a vague threat to a specific one," Emmanuelle Lo Verso, a spokeswoman for the security department, told the AP.

The Geneva prosecutor's office said an official investigation has been opened into "criminal preparatory acts" — a charge against anyone who takes "concrete measures of a technical or organizational type in the aim of committing a grave infraction." □

APNewsBreak: Dealer: Gun linked to Paris came thru US

JOVANA GEC
DUSAN STOJANOVIC
Associated Press

BELGRADE, Serbia (AP) — One of the guns linked to Islamic militants in the Paris attacks that killed 130 people was exported to the United States in 2013, the head of a Serbian arms factory said Thursday.

Milojko Brzakovic of the Zastava arms factory told The Associated Press that the M92 semi-automatic pistol's serial number matched one his company delivered to an American online arms dealer in May 2013. It was not clear how the gun got back to Europe.

At least seven of the weapons used or discovered after the Nov. 13 attacks in Paris have been identified as being produced by the Serbian factory located in Kragujevac, in central Serbia. Most were manufactured before Yugoslavia broke up in a civil war in the 1990s and most of those are modified versions of the Soviet AK-47, or Kalashnikov.

Brzakovic said all the guns were delivered legally but could have later found their way into illegal channels. "One was delivered to Bosnia in 1983, one to Skopje, Macedonia in December 1987, one to Golubici, near Knin (Croatia) in 1988, one to Zagreb (Croatia) 1987," he said.

He said the M92 pistol "is a semi-automatic weapon, a hunting and sporting weapon ... it cannot fire barrage fire, only single shots ... which are legal in America."

He said it was exported to an online arms seller in the United States, the Florida-based Century Arms, to which his factory exports up to 25,000 hunting and sports guns every year. He said the gun was delivered as a semi-automatic, but he did not know whether someone turned it into an automatic after delivery. The so-called "shortened Kalashnikov" is listed by U.S. arms dealers as selling for about \$460 apiece.

In a video posted online in December 2013, Century Arms advertised they were selling the AK-style pistol PAP M92, "a brand new firearm from the Zastava factory in Serbia" and demonstrated its attributes.

The AP left messages seeking comment on the gun with Century Arms, the FBI and another U.S. government agency, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives.

Brzakovic insisted that all arms exports from Serbia are under strict government control.

"We submit a request to our government to give consent and authorize the export. Until we receive that, we make no contract. Once we get a permission to export, we make a contract and arrange the dynamics," he said.

A web of rules and a large U.S. bureaucracy oversee the legal import and export of weapons like the Serbian M92 semi-automatic pistol.

American government approval is required to import firearms into the U.S. □



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Saudi foreign minister criticizes Iran at Gulf Arab summit

ABDULLAH AL-SHIHRI

Associated Press

RIYADH, Saudi Arabia (AP)

— Gulf Arab leaders meeting in Saudi Arabia reiterated Thursday their calls for a political solution to the wars in Yemen and Syria, but the kingdom's foreign minister went a step further, criticizing Iran's role in those conflicts.

Adel al-Jubeir told report-

ers after the two-day summit in Riyadh concluded that "Iran is playing a negative role in most regional issues." He said he had only met for "a few minutes" with his Iranian counterpart in Vienna last month on the sidelines of a meeting on Syria's nearly five-year war, in which Saudi Arabia and Iran are backing opposite sides of the conflict.

Riyadh is also hosting a Syrian opposition summit that gathered more than 100 representatives from various factions and rebel groups, in an effort to unite their ranks ahead of proposed peace talks with Syrian President Bashar Assad's government. Al-Jubeir said the kingdom hopes for better relations with Iran, but that the Islam-

ic Republic's policies have hindered diplomatic ties. His comments point to the struggle for regional supremacy between the Sunni kingdom and the Shiite republic that has played out in conflicts in Bahrain, Lebanon, Syria and Yemen, where Saudi Arabia is leading an Arab military intervention against Shiite rebels backed by Iran.

However, the official statement from the six-nation Gulf Cooperation Council refrained from directly criticizing Iran, but instead condemned terrorism and called on Yemen's warring sides to reach a political solution. The GCC also called for a political transitional period in Syria that eventually leads to free and fair multiparty elections. □

IS destroys bridge as Iraqi forces close in on Ramadi



Iraqi security forces take combat positions on the front line with Islamic State group militants in Ramadi, capital of Iraq's Anbar province, 70 miles west of Baghdad, Thursday, Dec. 10, 2015. Following significant advances on the Anbar provincial capital Ramadi Tuesday, Iraqi forces are now preparing to push into the city center from the southwest and the north.

(AP Photo/Osama Sami)

SUSANNAH GEORGE

Associated Press

BAGHDAD (AP)

— Besieged Islamic State militants in the Iraqi city of Ramadi destroyed a lock on the Euphrates River that served as a bridge as government forces on Thursday sought to cement their gains around the militant-held city west of Baghdad.

Since Iraq's military launched its push on Ramadi earlier this month, the militants have destroyed all other bridges leading into the city, both on the Euphrates and its tributary, the Warar River. Iraqi Maj Gen. Ismail al-Mahlawi, the head of military operations in the western Anbar province, said the lock destroyed Thursday was the last remaining bridge

from the city center to the northwest. "Daesh forces trying to stop our progress bombed the last bridge which connects the city center," he said, referring to IS by its Arabic language acronym. The locks' destruction leaves some 300 IS fighters trapped in the center of the city, he added. Col. Steven Warren, the spokesman for the U.S.-led coalition in Baghdad, said the destruction of the bridge may prove to be a tactical mistake for IS.

"What they've also done now is they've really cut themselves off," he said. "So the fighters left on the north side of the river can't retreat and the fighters on the south side of the river can't send reinforcements." □

Triple bombings in northeastern town in Syria kill 15

BEIRUT (AP) — Triple car bombs exploded in a town in northeastern Syria's predominantly Kurdish province of Hassakeh on Thursday, killing 15 civilians and wounding dozens more, Syria's state-run news agency said.

It said one of the explosions took place near a medical center and another at a crowded market in

the town of Tal Tamr, adding that the vehicles were packed with large amounts of explosives and significantly damaged shops and businesses.

The Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said at least 12 people were killed in the bombings, adding that the death toll was likely to rise because of the large number

of wounded and missing. The Observatory, which relies on a network of activists on the ground, said the exploding vehicles were likely tankers, causing the massive explosions.

Tal Tamr is an overwhelmingly Kurdish town where the main Kurdish fighting force in Syria — People's Protection Units, or YPG — is in control. The group is

the most effective fighting force against the Islamic State group, although there was no immediate claim of responsibility for the attacks.

Earlier Thursday, the Islamic State group retook a strategically important town in the central province of Homs from government forces, activists said.

The government had re-

captured the town of Mheen and surrounding villages from the extremists two weeks ago as part of a general offensive to secure the highway connecting Damascus to the country's northwest.

The loss deals a setback to the Syrian army's strategy to fortify the corridor with support from Russian airpower. □

Le Pen promises no witch hunts in regions her far-right wins

ELAINE GANLEY

Associated Press

PARIS (AP) — The head of France's far-right National Front made a final push for votes on Thursday, three days ahead of crucial elections, promising pragmatism over ideology in any regions won by her anti-immigration party and assuring there would be no witch hunts.

At a final rally, Le Pen underscored the national character of the regional vote, telling cheering supporters that a new France is within their grasp — and inside the ballot box. The lead candidates in all 13 French regions contesting the presidency of leadership councils shared the stage with Le Pen.

The anti-immigration National Front led in six regions in the Dec. 6 first round, and Le Pen herself led by a wide margin in the north where she is running.

But a poll by TNS-Sofres-One Point published Wednesday suggested that both Le Pen and her niece, Marion Marechal-Le Pen, who is running in



French far-right National Front Party leader, Marine Le Pen, center left, greets Far right National Front party regional leader for southeastern France, Marion Marechal-Le Pen, right, at the end of a meeting in Paris, France, Thursday, Dec. 10, 2015. The head of France's far-right National Front, Marine Le Pen, in the race for president of the northern region, attends a meeting with regional candidates three days before Sunday's elections.

(AP Photo/Francois Mori)

the south, would lose in the final round. Such an outcome would be a major setback for the National Front — and for Marine Le Pen's planned bid for the presidency in 2017.

The two Le Pens scored so

well in round one that the governing Socialists, straggling in third place, ordered their candidates to withdraw so their voters could cast ballots for the rival conservative mainstream to block the far right.

Le Pen softened her usually trenchant stance in a reach-out to left and right, saying her party represents a new way where "patriots" respect the interests of

the regions and clans and "political fraud" have no place.

"There will be no political witch hunts in the regions. They key word won't be ideology but pragmatism," she said in a clear bid to lure voters fearful of an agenda by a party accused by the mainstream of dividing the French.

But she also said that National Front regions would "open each file" when

deciding on subsidies for associations and other interests and "stop, reform or continue."

She and her niece have said in the past that they would refuse funding to interests representing a single community, a reference to Muslim groups. Both regions have large Muslim populations.

Earlier Thursday, Le Pen vowed, if elected to head the north, to bring suit against the French state over the situation in Calais, where thousands of migrants are camped in hopes of reaching Britain. She claimed on BFM television that the port city had deteriorated to the point where the mayor was issuing passes to residents to get home — a claim the mayor quickly denied.

The poll of voter intentions suggested Marine Le Pen would get 47 percent and her conservative adversary Xavier Bertrand, a former labor minister, 53 percent. Marechal-Le Pen, running in the Provence-Alpes-Cote d'Azur region, would take 46 percent of the vote, according to the poll, while her conservative rival Christian Estrosi would get 54 percent. The online poll took place two days after last Sunday's first round. □

Portugal's new government makes more cuts

BARRY HATTON

Associated Press

LISBON, Portugal (AP) — Portugal's new anti-austerity Socialist government has hit a snag: it needs to introduce more cutbacks to keep its pledge of getting the budget deficit lower than 3 percent this year, as demanded by its eurozone partners and creditors.

Finance Minister Mario Centeno said after a Cabinet meeting Thursday the government is imposing a freeze on non-urgent spending through the end of the year and cutting 46 million euros (\$50 million) in cash available for some departments. He said the spending crackdown for the last three weeks of the year was due to "a series

of deviations" from the national spending and revenue plan. He did not elaborate. The Socialists took power two weeks ago, heading an anti-austerity alliance in Parliament that included the Communist Party and radical Left Bloc to unseat a center-right government. The Socialists have vowed to abide by eurozone debt-reduction rules while also easing austerity — a balancing act the government's critics doubt it will be able to pull off. In a blow for Prime Minister Antonio Costa, an opinion poll published Thursday indicated that most Portuguese think the ousted prime minister, Pedro Passos Coelho, should still be in power.

In Portugal's Catholic University poll, commissioned by public broadcaster Radiotelevisao Portuguesa and other media, 52 percent of those questioned thought Passos Coelho ought to be leading the country compared with 37 percent for Costa.

But at the same time, 49 percent of those questioned said they thought Portugal's president made the right decision by installing Costa, given his creation of a broad anti-austerity alliance, with 35 percent saying they disagreed. Others didn't answer or didn't know.

The poll of 1,183 adults was conducted in person on Dec. 5 and 6. It had a margin of error of 2.9 percent. □



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Who's investigating fake Chinese goods? Fake investigators



A vendor eats his meal near ABB branded products on sale at Liushi China Electronic City, a market known for selling counterfeit electronic components, in the town of Liushi near Wenzhou city in eastern China's Zhejiang province. The vast marketplace is well-known for selling counterfeit electrical components, many of them made on the outskirts of town.
 (AP Photo/Ng Han Guan)

ERIKA KINETZ
Associated Press

SHANGHAI (AP) — Multi-national corporations doing business in China face a losing battle when it comes to keeping copies of their products off the market: The anti-counterfeiting industry they rely on is plagued with fraud, making it that much easier for potentially dangerous fake goods — from air bags to Christmas lights — to reach consumers, an Associated Press investigation has found.

Most Western companies subcontract anti-counterfeiting work to private investigators paid on commission. More seizures mean higher fees, creating powerful incentives to cheat in an industry with little oversight. As a result, money spent fighting counterfeiting often doesn't make things better, and sometimes makes them worse.

The AP found instances of investigative fraud involving products that could be hazardous: counterfeit auto parts, pharmaceuticals, personal care prod-

ucts and electrical components.

The wrongdoing took many forms:

- Western firms paid investigators who were themselves manufacturing or selling counterfeit versions of their clients' own goods.
- Investigators doctored documents, fabricating raids that never took place.
- Investigators colluded with factories to make counterfeit goods they could "seize" and present to their Western bosses for payment.

As counterfeiting has flourished in China over decades, a lucrative, parallel industry has blossomed to fight it. Counterfeiting today is a multibillion-dollar business in China, which produces nearly nine of every 10 fake items seized at U.S. borders.

Chinese authorities have been getting better at fining counterfeiters and sending them to jail. But the momentum of reform has yet to reach the front lines of the fight against fakes, according to previously undisclosed material from legal cases and

internal corporate investigations in China reviewed by the AP, lawsuits, and interviews with 16 private investigators, lawyers and law-enforcement officials. All described a broken system, beset by endemic and underreported fraud, made worse by Western companies that have a poor command over how to successfully fight fraud. Shanghai's Public Security Bureau took the unusual step of warning foreign brand owners to be watchful of the investigators they hire. "We very much hope that brand owners will pay attention and devote more manpower and material resources to ensure that the fight against counterfeiting is healthy and orderly," the bureau said in written response to ques-

tions from the AP.

One of the world's largest consumer goods companies hired an investigator to track down counterfeit anti-dandruff shampoo. But instead of finding real counterfeiters, the investigator, Wang Yunming, set up a factory to produce counterfeit shampoo himself, which he then "seized" and billed to the firm as a successful raid, according to two employees involved in the investigation who spoke on condition of anonymity for fear of losing their jobs.

It wasn't the first such factory Wang founded. It was the fourth.

Wang was convicted of fraud and is due to be released from prison in 2023, according to a copy of a judgment from Hefei Inter-

mediate People's Court in China's Anhui province.

Swiss power technology giant ABB Asea Brown Boveri found that one of the investigators it was paying to hunt counterfeiters was herself selling fake ABB circuit breakers. ABB sued the firm she worked for, the China United Intellectual Property Protection Center, which was one of China's oldest and largest investigations companies. ABB lost its case in Beijing, despite the fact that the investigator, a woman who called herself Flaming Lee, was convicted of selling ABB counterfeits by a court in Dubai, where she lived.

ABB, a \$40 billion company whose products range from simple switches to sophisticated industrial robotics, declined to comment. □

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Sleepy days over for Venezuela congress

HANNAH DREIER
Associated Press

CARACAS, Venezuela (AP)

— Venezuela's socialist lawmakers vowed Thursday to pass laws and make appointments until the last possible minute to protect their revolution before the opposition takes over congress next month on prom-

government workers in socialist red T-shirts patrolling the palm-tree-lined National Assembly compound say the body will be unrecognizable come next year. "It's going to be more work, less singing," said Jimmy Toval, who has handled logistics in the legislature for 15 years. "The new guys are

ity reports and economic figures the body is supposed to receive annually have morphed into documents that read more like celebratory press releases or that have stopped coming in altogether. While lawmakers have sometimes promised to investigate major scandals,



Pedestrians walk in front of the National Assembly building in Caracas, Venezuela, Thursday, Dec. 10, 2015. Venezuela's ruling socialist party is set to rush through a series of appointments before the opposition takes over congress next month with promises to revive what it calls a moribund institution. The legislature was expected to name 12 Supreme Court justices Thursday during a final session, filling vacancies left by a group of judges who requested early retirement.

(AP Photo/Fernando Llano)

ises to revive an institution they say has been subservient to the presidency.

At the first session since the opposition won a landslide victory in Sunday's legislative election, lawmakers heard performances of patriotic songs and promised to never cooperate with the "bourgeoisie" leaders who will take control of the legislature Jan. 5. The election has created a divided government for the first time since the late President Hugo Chavez launched his socialist government here in 1998.

"We will never change our position, no matter what kind of blackmail or manipulation they throw our way," outgoing National Assembly President Diosdado Cabello said. "We will be here until midnight on January 4.

The refusal to negotiate probably won't matter, given the opposition's two-third majority. Even the

coming in to write laws."

During 15 years of socialist control, Venezuela's congress has met infrequently to rubber-stamp the president's agenda, reducing its schedule to just one day a week.

The public is not allowed in at all and reporters are corralled into a room far from the floor where they watch proceedings on a television with an inconsistent signal. That televised view drew derision in 2013 when the camera averted its gaze from a fight on the assembly floor that sent high-profile opposition leader Maria Corina Machado to the hospital. It broadcast a shot of the ceiling instead. Last month, lawmakers approved the president's budget proposal with minimal debate, as they have for years. At other times, they have danced around the chamber to drums and held sing-alongs.

The detailed accountabil-

like a 2013 prison riot in which dozens of inmates were shot to death, they rarely present conclusions. On Thursday, lawmakers gave a promotion to the judge who earlier this year convicted opposition leader Leopoldo Lopez to more than a decade in prison for his role leading anti-government street protests in 2014. Human rights groups consider Lopez the region's highest-profile political prisoner, and the opposition has vowed to pass a law that would free him.

The legislature is expected to appoint a series of Supreme Court judges next week who would in theory be able to nullify the opposition's laws by finding them unconstitutional. Human Rights Watch has called this plan undemocratic. If the Supreme Court began overturning laws, the opposition would likely try to impeach those judges or pack the court with their own picks. □

Argentina's new president Macri vows major changes and honesty

PETER PRENGAMAN
VICENTE PANETTA

Associated Press

BUENOS AIRES, Argentina (AP) — Mauricio Macri was sworn in as Argentina's president Thursday, inheriting myriad economic problems from the often-divisive outgoing leader Cristina Fernandez, who skipped the inauguration in a final sign of confrontation that underscored deep polarization in the South American nation.

Macri, the former mayor of Buenos Aires who hails from one of Argentina's richest families, took the oath of office in Congress in front of legislators, several Latin American heads of state and other dignitaries, including former Spanish King Juan Carlos I.

"Today a dream is being achieved," Macri said as he took the oath 15 minutes ahead of schedule, surprising commentators who noted Argentina isn't known for such punctuality. The new president then launched into a speech that was both a long list of promises and a frank, if not brutal, assessment of how he sees Argentina, a country rich in natural resources that has also suffered several major economic meltdowns. Macri said that the nation of 41 million people entered the 21st century behind in its development and that its education system needs to be modernized at all levels. He said that "lying about and hiding" the state of the economy had tarnished Argentina's reputation worldwide, a clear dig at the Fernandez administration, which often put out suspect figures on inflation, poverty rates and gross domestic product.

"I will always be honest with you," Macri told the nation. "And being honest means telling you that the challenges in front of us are enormous."

The 56-year-old ran on promises to usher in an era of more civil discourse and roll back much of the Fernandez administration spending that many economists say has brought Argentina to the brink of another financial crisis.

One thing standing in his way is the continued, hostile influence of Fernandez, whose party still controls the Senate and has the largest bloc in the lower house. Throughout his campaign, Macri argued that measured free-market reforms would overhaul the struggling economy. He also promised to be a leader "who listens more and talks less," a clear contrast with Fernandez, who frequently blasted opponents during hours-long speeches.

In his Thursday address, Macri promised to fight the nation's growing drug trade "as no president has before." He also said he would make good on his aim to achieve "zero poverty" and be ruthless in cracking down on corruption.

Fernandez and her late husband and predecessor, Nestor Kirchner, dominated Argentina's political landscape the past 12 years. The power couple sharply increased spending on social welfare programs while raising tariffs in attempts to protect local industries and aligning the country with leftist leaders like late Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez and Bolivian President Evo Morales.

Macri has promised to undo many of those policies and improve relations with the United States.

"Finally, the day of change has come," said Nelly Lopez, a 58-year-old waving Argentine and Venezuelan flags outside of Congress. "This (economic) model is ending, just like it is in Venezuela.

Lopez, one of tens of thousands in the streets, said she and her three daughters immigrated to Argentina from Venezuela several years ago because of frustration with Chavez. □



Special to Aruba Today:

Local Artist Cado de Lannoy Capturing Our Heritage in a Different Perspective

CAROLINA BULOS

(www.bondia24.com)

ORANJESTAD – Cado de Lannoy is an artist dedicated to doing art/photography work of the Aruban heritage and presenting this in a different perspective. "Aruba is known for its beaches, palm trees etc., but I want to show that there is much more than that, there is a history that can be shown through our monumental buildings".

-NAME

The artistic name that is used to present his work is "Cadosbla" and as he puts it, is a very "random" name that just sort of happened. "There was a time when I used to make some T-shirts with black & white photography, so it was Cado's Black & White T-shirt edition, and I showed my friend Ash from Tangerine, the tag and he read the first part only and a piece of the another, and asked me 'Cados bla?' and I told him to keep reading. But after that day the name just kind of stuck" Cado tells us.

Cado receives his material all over the island of Aruba. He explains that he is a very outdoors person and loves to surf and he sees everything as an opportunity to find something new and different. "Around Aruba there are plenty of old houses or new ones with nobody living in them yet, and they all have a story to tell", he continues telling us that he was recently in New York where he took part in a photography course to continue improving his skills. He always taught himself everything he knows, but then decided to take things more seriously to really become more professional in digital photography, which he thinks is a very important step in the



aspect of a business and as an artist as well. He took part in an exhibition to display his work that he had done in Aruba as well as New Jersey and had great feedback. In Aruba the support is huge since everyone knows each other in a way. Which is why he also wanted to display his work internationally to see what the reactions would be, and the perfect places for doing so being New York & New Jersey that are known to be art hubs and having his girlfriend living in New Jersey as well, who is one of his biggest supporters.

Continued on Page 14

Cado de Lannoy

Continued from Page 13

"They were very interested and they thought my style was unique. There are some photographs that look like a painting, and they really liked that concept."

-AVAILABLE

Something unique that is also available in Cado's work is his collection of antique mosaic of Aruba which he photographs and then prints it on objects that are used on a daily basis, for example coasters. These are available for purchase at Korteweg (held every month at various locations

on the island) or at Cosecha which is right in Downtown, behind the parliament building. Meanwhile he is also working with the high-rise area to have his work be displayed in a hotel, and also in San Nicolas where they recently opened up a new gallery/store. They approached Cado since they wanted to sell and expose international as well as local work. Internationally he has his work displayed in New Jersey. "At the moment I'm experiencing different possibilities to print and present my photography in a very different way, because usually photography is available in a very simple way. Right now I'm printing on wood, and getting great reactions and it's different." In the past

Cado was part of a team that designed a brand of clothing called "Ducks & Robots" that was very well known on the island. When asked what inspired him to take this direction of art, he explained that while working with Ducks & Robots he would take pictures of the merchandise, and would always scout locations to do the photoshoots. So his inspiration always came from this. "Everyone always told me I had to do what I love, but I wasn't really sure about it and always did it as a hobby. Up until a few years back that I really started focusing solely on photography, I can say that I went deep into it and made it into more than just a hobby. After my Beach Tennis career here, I decided to just continue photographing." A challenge he says is that his career is still not a "for sure thing" which is a scary aspect of the job. But he believes in doing what you love every day and he is very motivated for it.

Aruba is definitely opening up more to art as well as local artists, especially in events like Korteweg which is promoting this more and more and also Cosecha. "There are artists that definitely live off of their art. I want to inspire entrepreneurship, you can live as an artist but you can also make use of your art to make something and sell it"

-KORTEWEG

"About 2 months ago I was nominated for "Talented Youth 2015" in the category of 'Entrepreneurship & Cul-



ture' which was really great. And Korteweg which Cado has also been a part of is receiving a 'prestige award'. Korteweg exists since May/June and consists out of 4 guys who came together, Cado, Ashlin, Frankie and Mario" he explains.

"Ash has his brand of bags that he makes called "Tangerine", Frankie makes natural drinks like Taki Aruba and Mario is an all-around handy-man that can make just about anything. The group initiated this idea since at the time there were some activities going on in Main Street and approached the Minister of Culture about their idea in displaying art works in Main Street to attract more people. "I asked the Minister to give me an opportunity to present this idea and to see how it goes. He gave me the green light and told me to pick a location and so I chose Korteweg. I arrived with wooden pallets, asked some artists to come together and to see how we could sell some stuff together and the result was a success. That's when I told my friends that we should do this again but on a bigger scale. We received help from Unoca and they

helped us in every cultural event that we organized. We believe in presenting with a good atmosphere, not just putting things on a table, but a whole experience for locals as well as tourists. We asked Cado if there were any other projects on the way and what we could expect from him. Laughing he replied: "I have too much things going on, so I had to drop a few. A lot of people have approached me and asked me to be a part of something. So right now I'm thinking about what is best for me as well, instead of being everywhere." Cado is currently working part time at Cosecha helping with the social media and improving their art promotion. To conclude he says: "The best part of my job right now is doing what I love. I work with all types of people, if something needs help creatively and I get called I'm there. My job varies a lot, I can make use of my artistic side by making use of pallets, interior design, photography and more. To check out some of his work you can go to his website: www.cadosbla.com or check him out on Instagram: cado297



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EAGLE BEACH - Recently the Aruba Tourism Authority honored Mr. Charles and Mrs. Kathy Burke as Distinguished Visitors of Aruba as a token of appreciation for visiting the island for more than 10 consecutive years.

Ms. Darline de Cuba representing the Aruba Tourism Authority, Visitors care Liaison bestowed the certificate of Distinguished Visitors to the honorees on behalf of the Government of Aruba.

Ms. De Cuba thanked them for choosing Aruba as their vacation destination and as their home away from home for so many years. Charles and Kathy stated that the main reasons for returning to Aruba are the



weather, the restaurants, the safety, and most of all the people. Along with friends and family, Mr. Francis Ridderstap

was present at the ceremony and handed out some nice gifts to the honorees and also thanked them on behalf of Divi Tamarijn. □

Loyal Visitors Honored by the Aruba Tourism Authority



EAGLE BEACH - Recently the Aruba Tourism Authority had the great pleasure of honoring a group of

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Ambassadors. The symbolic honorary titles are presented in the name of the Minister of Tourism as tokens of appreciation to guests who visit Aruba for 20-to-34 and 34-or-more consecutive years. The honorees for Goodwill Ambassadors were Mr. Guillermo and Mrs. Luisa Ibañez Groppa. The honorees for Emerald Ambassadors were Mr. Charles and Mrs. Jerry Sechrist of Pennsylvania, who received the special Emerald Coin and Emerald Certificate in honor of their 41 years visiting Aruba!

weather, the beaches, the restaurants, the Casinos, and just about everything else! They say being on the island is like being in paradise, that the people are like family to them, and that Aruba is truly their 'home-away-from-home.' The certificates were presented by Darline S. de Cuba representing the Aruba Tourism Authority, together with friends and associates Ms. Rina Werleman from La Cabana and Ms. Patricia from Paradise Beach Villas. Congratulations to all! □

Real Madrid Loses Appeal of Copa del Rey Disqualification

Page 19



Jose Aldo, Conor McGregor Finally Collide at UFC 194

Conor McGregor celebrates after his fight with Dustin Poirier in Las Vegas. With a year of exquisite taunts and verbal roundhouses, McGregor has dominated the promotion of his wildly anticipated UFC showdown with Jose Aldo. Getting into the cage and ending Aldo's 10-year winning streak at UFC 194 will be another matter entirely.

(AP Photo/John Locher)

GREG BEACHAM
AP Sports Writer

LAS VEGAS (AP) — Jose Aldo is the only featherweight champion in UFC history. The brilliant Brazilian star is widely considered the pound-for-pound best mixed martial artist in the world. He hasn't lost a fight in 10 years. And yet in the casinos of

Las Vegas, Aldo is a betting underdog in the main event of UFC 194 on Saturday night.

Behold the power of Conor McGregor, the loquacious Irish challenger who has persuaded the world he can end 2015 by dethroning a king.

"He is already beaten," McGregor said. "I look in his

eyes, and I see someone who knows his era is over. It's a new era. It's my era. I almost want to comfort him. I want to say, 'Don't worry. It will all be over soon.'"

A year of promotional hype and fan anticipation culminates at the MGM Grand Garden Arena in the main event of the biggest show

on a huge three-day weekend of UFC fights.

Aldo (25-1) and McGregor (18-2) have traded innumerable insults and menacing glares during the buildup to this injury-delayed showdown. It's finally time to find out whether McGregor can back up some of the most delicious bravado in recent sports history.

"I get in there, and I put on a show," McGregor said. "I come to fight, and this fight will be a performance. I'm not just going to beat Jose. I'm going to embarrass Jose in there. I don't need to gather any more intel, any more research. It's done. He has already lost."

Continued on page 21



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NBA Roundup:

DeRozan scores 28 as Raptors snap Spurs' streak, 97-94



Toronto Raptors' forward Luis Scola, left, and teammate DeMar DeRozan battle for the ball with San Antonio Spurs' forward Kawhi Leonard, center, during first half of an NBA basketball game in Toronto, Wednesday, Dec. 9, 2015.

(Nathan Denette/Canadian Press/AP)

TORONTO (AP) — DeMar DeRozan scored 28 points and Kyle Lowry added 19 as the Toronto Raptors ended the San Antonio Spurs' four-game winning streak with a 97-94 victory on Wednesday. Luis Scola had 16 points and Toronto never trailed in handing San Antonio just

its third loss in the last 18 games. Manu Ginobili had 17 points off the bench for the Spurs, who also got 13 points from LaMarcus Aldridge. Danny Green hit a 3-pointer following a timeout to make it a three-point game with 2:47 to play, but Bismack Biyombo threw down a

dunk to restore the Raptors' five-point edge. Kawhi Leonard's follow shot later narrowed the advantage to three, but Toronto was able to run out the clock. In Auburn Hills, Michigan, Matt Barnes tossed in a desperation 3-pointer from just inside midcourt with

1.1 seconds left to lift the Memphis Grizzlies over the Detroit Pistons 93-92. Marcus Morris missed a contested shot with 7 seconds left that could have clinched the game for the Pistons, and Andre Drummond's tip bounced off the rim. The Grizzlies grabbed the ball and fired an outlet pass to Barnes. He let go a running, two-handed shot as he crossed halfcourt that went in, silencing the Palace crowd as players on the Memphis bench celebrated. Zach Randolph led Memphis with 21 points and 16 rebounds, while Marc Gasol had 19 points and 12 rebounds. Boston's Isaiah Thomas scored nine of his 20 points in the final 3 minutes to lead the Celtics past the Chicago Bulls 105-100. Kelly Olynyk added 15 points, Jae Crowder and Evan Turner each had 13 and David Lee scored 12 for the Celtics, who had eight players in double figures and won for the

fourth time in five games. They host undefeated Golden State next on Friday. The Houston Rockets defeated the Washington Wizards 109-103 after James Harden had 42 points, nine rebounds and seven assists. Harden scored 23 in the second half a day after he finished with a season-low 10 points in a loss at Brooklyn. Corey Brewer added 15 points and Patrick Beverly had 14 to help Houston to its fourth win in five games. John Wall had 26 points, 12 assists and nine rebounds for Washington. Kemba Walker and Marvin Williams scored 18 points each to lead the Charlotte Hornets past the Miami Heat 99-81 for their third straight victory, while Kevin Martin scored 37 points, and Karl-Anthony Towns had 26 points and 14 rebounds to lift the Minnesota Timberwolves over the Los Angeles Lakers 123-122 in overtime. In other games, J.J.

Donaldson opens with 63 to lead Thailand Championship by 3

CHONBURI, Thailand (AP) — Jamie Donaldson of Wales enjoyed a sizzling opening round of 9-under-par 63 to take a three-stroke lead over three players includ-

ing 2013 winner Sergio Garcia in the Thailand Championship on Thursday. Donaldson, who hasn't won in 16 months, birdied his first four holes and the

last two at Amata Spring Country Club, and said, "I couldn't really do things wrong. "I never really missed any fairways. The good par

save on nine was the key to keep the momentum going after pushing the tee shot a little bit. I got up and down there from about 20 feet." Garcia, who lifted his 23rd career title in Vietnam last weekend, and locals Chinnarat Phadungsilp and Chananat Sakulpolphisarn were at 6 under. Garcia was on par after his second bogey on the 10th hole, then reeled off six birdies over the last eight holes. "It was a wonderful back nine," he said.

Chinnarat spoiled his round with a double bogey on the 15th hole, while Chananat bogeyed the 16th. Martin Kaymer, who lost to Lee Westwood by one shot 12 months ago, shot a bogey-free 68 to lie five behind Donaldson, while Westwood began with a 1-under 71, as did Bubba Watson, who won the World Challenge in the Bahamas last weekend. Nathan Holman, who won his home Australian PGA title last week, carded a par 72. □



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NHL Roundup:

Bergeron passes Schmidt, Bruins beat Canadiens 3-1



Boston Bruins' Patrice Bergeron (37) scores past Montreal Canadiens' goalie Mike Condon as Canadiens' Daniel Carr looks on during third period NHL hockey action, in Montreal, on Wednesday, Dec. 9, 2015. The Bruins defeated the Canadiens 3-1.

(Paul Chiasson/Canadian Press/AP)

MONTREAL (AP) — Loui Eriksson and Landon Ferraro scored third-period goals 42 seconds apart to help the Boston Bruins rally past Montreal 3-1 Wednesday and end a seven-game regular-season skid against the rival Canadiens.

Patrice Bergeron's third-period goal pushed him past

Milt Schmidt for 11th on the Bruins' career list with 576 points. That score capped a three-goal rally by Boston. Eriksson tied the game 1-1 with his 11th goal 7:53 into the final period, and Ferraro scored on a wrist shot 42 seconds later.

Paul Byron scored for Montreal 8:49 into the first, and

the Canadiens lost their season-high third straight.

Vancouver's Daniel Sedin and Alexander Edler each had a goal and an assist to lift the Canucks over the New York Rangers 2-1.

Henrik Sedin added two assists for Vancouver, and Ryan Miller made 32 saves. The Canucks won consecutive games for the first time since Oct. 30 and Nov. 2.

Dan Boyle scored on a penalty shot for the Rangers, and Henrik Lundqvist made 23 saves.

Daniel Sedin scored the winner on a slick deflection down low at 9:24 of the third period off a slap pass from Edler for his 13th of the season just 40 seconds after Boyle tied the game 1-1.

In Denver, Beau Bennett and Olli Maatta combined for three goals in 3:24 during the third period as the Pittsburgh Penguins rallied to beat the Colorado Avalanche 4-2.

Bennett had two goals during the flurry and Maatta had the winner. Maatta also had an assist.

Bennett tied it at 2 with a backhand at 7:19 of the third, and Maatta put the Penguins ahead 2:05 later when his sharp-angle shot went off goalie Reto Berra and popped up in the air. The puck hit the crossbar and went off Colorado's John Mitchell and into the net. Marc-Andre Fleury had 24 saves for Pittsburgh, and Matt Cullen also scored.

Matt Duchene and Erik Johnson scored first-period goals for the Avalanche. Berra finished with 29 saves. The Edmonton Oilers beat the San Jose Sharks 4-3 for their fourth straight victory after Taylor Hall scored at 3:59 of overtime.

Leon Draisaitl, Jordan Eberle and Iiro Pakarinen also scored for the Oilers.

The Sharks lost their fifth straight. Justin Braun, Patrick Marleau and Joe Pavelski scored for San Jose.

Draisaitl set up Hall's winner with a pass on a 2-on-1 that Hall tipped in for his 12th of the season.

Pakarinen made it 3-all with 4:37 left, and Anders Nilsson had 27 saves for the Oilers. □

Real Madrid loses appeal of Copa del Rey disqualification

MADRID (AP) — The Spanish soccer federation on Thursday confirmed Real Madrid's disqualification from the Copa del Rey because of an ineligible player.

A federation committee dismissed Madrid's appeal, and the club immediately said it would take the case to Spain's Administrative Court for Sport.

Real Madrid was eliminated in its opening round for fielding Denis Cheryshev in a first-leg 3-1 win over Cadiz on Dec. 2. Cheryshev was carrying a one-match suspension for yellow cards last season, when he played for Villarreal on loan from Madrid. Madrid insists that Cheryshev was not properly informed of the suspension.

"Real Madrid has received and analyzed the resolution of the appeals committee, which once again

verifies that the player was not notified of his ban, the only way the aforementioned ban can take effect," the club said in a statement. "The club has therefore submitted an appeal to the Administrative Court for Sport."

The Spanish federation had already dismissed Madrid's line of defense, and in Thursday's ruling again disputed the club's claim that Cheryshev was not personally notified. The federation said that all necessary legal proceedings were observed. The second leg was originally scheduled for next Wednesday at the Santiago Bernabeu Stadium, and Madrid continued to sell tickets for the game, saying that "in the event that the match is not played, Real Madrid will refund the full price of the purchased tickets." □

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Inside the NFL: Minter takes control of Arizona defense

BOB BAUM
Associated Press

TEMPE, Ariz. (AP) -- Kevin Minter didn't have the immediate success he expected when the Arizona Cardinals drafted him in the second round out of LSU in 2013. He's having it now. Minter, as middle linebacker, calls the defensive sets for the front seven of a Cardinals team that was 10-2 and had won six in a row heading into a game Thursday night against Minnesota.

essarily cocky," he said, "but at the same time you're thinking, 'I'm going to play.'" Instead, Dansby signed a one-year deal for the job. Last season, Foote inked a one-year contract. "I got a reality check when Karlos came in," Minter said. "He really showed me how to be a professional. The next year with Foote, it was even more so. So it means a lot playing my position now and doing what I always knew I could do."

defensive linemen. He's a lot like Rashad (Johnson) in our secondary. Everything with the front seven he puts in order before the play." In Arizona's win over Cincinnati, Minter had a career-high 12 tackles. He credits his strong year to his offseason, when he rehabilitated his pectoral muscle and studied the playbook. "I really got into the book," he said, "just trying to understand where everybody fits into the defense. Because I'm the



Baltimore Ravens tight end Nick Boyle (82) scores a two point conversion as Arizona Cardinals middle linebacker Kevin Minter (51) defends during the second half of an NFL football game, Monday, Oct. 26, 2015, in Glendale, Ariz.
(AP Photo/Ross D. Franklin)

For two seasons, he waited for his chance, first behind Karlos Dansby in 2013, then behind Larry Foote last year. "He learned from two really good players in Karlos and Larry how to be a pro," Arizona coach Bruce Arians said. As a rookie, he played one down on defense. The rest he spent on special teams. He played more last season, though usually in run situations, and he played most of the season with a torn pectoral muscle. He chose to play through the injury rather than shut it down for surgery. Sitting and watching - and hurting - "humbled me," Minter said. "Coming in here, me being a second-round pick, I wouldn't say I was nec-

Last year, Minter had 49 tackles, five for a loss, and one pass defended. He passed those statistics this year, a long time ago. Through 10 games, Minter is second on the team with 80 tackles (behind Deone Bucannon's 89) with 12 tackles for a loss, five quarterback hits, a forced fumble and five passes defended. All the while, he's taking defensive signals and making sure others are where they're supposed to be. "He runs everything," said Bucannon, who lines up alongside Minter in Arizona's 4-3 scheme. "He probably says four or five different checks every play because he understands it. He's a really intelligent player. He sets the front. He guides and directs our

middle linebacker, I'm pretty much the quarterback, so I took my time to try to learn it and obviously you see the success that's going on now." Arians said Minter is in better shape than before. "He changed his body," the coach said. "He went from just a straight thumper at 250 (pounds) to a more svelt thumper, and he can stay on the grass in third down situations now. He's turned into a hell of a blitz. He brings power when he blitzes." Plus, Arians said, "his command of the defense is light years from where it was." With all the defensive sets and blitz schemes the Cardinals use, it can get hectic out there. At least that's the way it looks. □

Johnny Manziel says he was 'forced to learn hard lesson'

TOM WITHERS
Associated Press

BEREA, Ohio (AP) -- Johnny Manziel didn't like being punished for partying. He didn't agree with being benched and isn't happy it cost him the spotlight of a Monday night game. But now that his punishment's over, Manziel says he wants to make the most of his new chance to start. And if he doesn't behave, it may be Johnny Football's last chance with the Browns.

Speaking to reporters for the first time since being demoted last month for off-field behavior, Manziel didn't apologize for his actions, offered no promises and said he feels fortunate to be back in the starting lineup this week against San Francisco.

"I was forced to learn a hard lesson," he said. "I had to learn the hard way and I'm lucky to be back in the position that I'm in and being the starter again, so I'm definitely not taking that lightly. That's for sure." Browns coach Mike Pettine punished Manziel after a video surfaced of the polarizing and popular QB holding a champagne bottle and rapping profane lyrics at a club in Austin, Texas. Manziel had promised the Browns he wouldn't be a distraction during the team's bye week and then became one on social media sites.

Manziel called the situation "a lapse in judgment" and said he learned his lesson. "Obviously, there's a way to conduct yourself that 31 other guys in the league do each and every week," he said. "You have to follow that example and realize that this is a very prestigious situation that I'm in being a starting quarterback in the NFL, so I have to take pride in that and act accordingly."

He had better. Pettine warned Wednesday that the team won't stand any more off-field shenanigans. "It would be hard for me to sit here and say, 'We have a zero-tolerance policy,'" Pettine said. "But if some-



Cleveland Browns quarterback Johnny Manziel plays in Cleveland.
(AP Photo/David Richard)


thing were to occur, I could imagine that the repercussions would be harsh."

As for his two-game benching, the 23-year-old Manziel made it clear he thought the penalty was excessive. "In coach Pettine's mind, he thought that was necessary to get the harsh point across to me," Manziel said. "Did I like it? No. Did I have to sit there with a bad taste in my mouth and accept the consequences for my actions? Sure. I'm just sitting here today very thankful to be back in this role and be back in front of these guys and being in the huddle calling plays again and trying to go out and salvage what's left of this season and take some pride in these last four games."

Manziel's start on Sunday will be his first since he passed for a career-high 372 yards against Pittsburgh on Nov. 15. He was named Cleveland's starter for the final six games before partying away the opportunity.

Now he has four games to show how far he's progressed - to spark a season already up in flames for Cleveland and help the Browns decide whether he can be their future quarterback.

"It comes down to pride," Manziel said. "If people have pride in what they do and their craft. I'm completely bunkered in for these last four weeks and will come in every day and give every ounce of energy to try to win these last four games." □



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Jose Aldo, Conor McGregor Finally Collide at UFC 194

Continued from page 17

While McGregor's personality is both magnetic and divisive, Aldo is no wallflower himself, as evidenced by his testy relations with the UFC for the past few years. He has reacted with amusement and anger to McGregor's provocations while adding his own jabs, albeit without the inimitable showmanship of McGregor's rants.

"I'm going to hit him, and he's going to sleep," Aldo said through a translator. "I don't really care how I win. I care about winning. Really the only difference is I always beat Americans, and this time I'm going to beat an Irishman."

Aldo could say little when he was injured in training shortly before he was originally scheduled to meet McGregor in July, scraping an elaborate promotional campaign and providing more fodder for his challenger. McGregor took on the highly regarded Chad Mendes instead, scoring a second-round stoppage and earning an interim belt.

That honor didn't satisfy McGregor, whose plans for world domination aren't confined to one weight class or even one endeavor ("Hollywood is screaming for me," he said).

McGregor has attracted global attention to the grateful UFC, which has heavily showcased his magnetism and verbosity. He has become a fan favorite — particularly among his countrymen,



Jose Aldo, from Brazil, right, and Chan Sung Jung, from South Korea, battle in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. With a year of exquisite taunts and verbal roundhouses, Conor McGregor has dominated the promotion of his wildly anticipated UFC showdown with Aldo. Getting into the cage and ending Aldo's 10-year winning streak at UFC 194 will be another matter entirely.

(AP Photo/Felipe Dana)

who filled Vegas' casinos with songs and revelry before and after his victory over Mendes.

"I think it's going to be an electric atmosphere," McGregor said. "I feel the Brazilians will come out to support. They're going to be swallowed by the Irish, though. It's going to be a green Christmas in Las Vegas, that's for sure."

McGregor anticipates moving up to lightweight and becoming a two-division undisputed champion next year. But first, he must handle Aldo's mix of solid

technical striking, formidable Brazilian jiu-jitsu and superior defense.

McGregor is a fearsome striker with an improving ground game, and his ability to absorb punishment should make it difficult for Aldo to finish quickly. Yet Aldo has been too resourceful and too tough for

any opponent since 2005, always finding a way to impose his will on the world's best 145-pounders.

McGregor doesn't think the details matter. He insists his greatest victory has already been won in the arena of Aldo's mind — a notion that Aldo answers with a smirk and a promise

to correct.

"I just don't see him answering the bell for the second round," McGregor said. "I can't see his face or his body at the beginning of the second round. I see him KO'd inside one. And when you KO a man inside one, there's no need for a rematch." □

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Vainglory: A new touch-screen approach to e-sports

DERRIK J. LANG

AP Entertainment Writer

SANTA ANA, Calif. (AP) —

Kristian Segerstrale, chief operating officer of Super Evil Megacorp, the company behind the mobile game "Vainglory," believes freeing competitive gaming from old-school inputs — namely, all those keyboards and controllers — is key to expanding e-sports, the genre of gaming that attracts millions of spectators online and in person, but has yet to achieve mainstream cultural awareness.

"If you want to play soccer, all you need is a ball," said Segerstrale during a break at the company's first-ever North American tournament. "If you want to play 'Vainglory,' all you need is a touch-screen device. We're at the very early stages. We only introduced a spectator mode in the game six months ago, but we believe 'Vainglory' can be the most accessible e-sport."

Unlike most e-sports titles, which are played using souped-up computers or game consoles, the multi-player online battle arena game plays out exclusively on smartphones and tablets. Instead of looking at a monitor and clicking a mouse or controller, "Vainglory" players tap touch screens to control characters during matches, which generally last about 20 minutes.

As with other MOBAs, such as "League of Legends" and "Dota 2," it's simple to play, but difficult to master. The game's fiery bouts between pairs of three-person squads offer a competitive experience that cannot be found in other mobile titles, such as "Angry Birds" or "Kim Kardashian: Hollywood." It also means everything e-athletes require is in their hands.

"The biggest difference is that our competitors aren't hidden behind monitors," said Segerstrale. "You can actually see them. It makes for more of a human connection. They're



This photo shows COO and Executive Director, Kristian Segerstrale in San Mateo, Calif. Segerstrale believes freeing competitive gaming from old-school inputs is key to expanding e-sports, the genre of gaming that attracts millions of spectators online and in person.

(Super Evil Megacorp via AP)

playing on the same commercially available touch-screen devices we have in our pockets. If you go behind the scenes of most e-sports tournaments, everyone is playing on \$8,000 computers."

After launching last year, "Vainglory" is attracting millions of players and spectators. An invitational held in Seoul, South Korea, earlier this year was watched by more than 1 million viewers, and Segerstrale said 1 million watched "Vainglory" bouts in November on Twitch. When the game launched in China, it shot to the top of the most-downloaded apps for Apple devices.

Segerstrale noted that because the only gear needed to play "Vainglory" is a smartphone or tablet, the player pool is often more diverse than other e-sports, which are predominantly dominated by young Asian men. He said

the captain of the second highest-ranked team is a female from China, and that several successful squads are comprised of unknown amateurs.

"We love the qualifying tournament format," said Segerstrale. "We had more than 650 teams enter this tournament in North America and Europe. You can come from nowhere and win. This group that just crushed the highest-ranked team was formed right before the tournament. We had never heard of them."

The contest was held Friday to Sunday at the eSports Arena, a new venue dedicated to competitive gaming in downtown Santa Ana, California. The 15,000-square-foot space inside a brick-lined building constructed in 1922 was recently transformed into a three-level hub for hosting and streaming competitive games — no matter the platform. □

Music-streaming giant Spotify mulls a 'paid only' option for new releases

RYAN NAKASHIMA

AP Business Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) —

Music-streaming giant Spotify is toying with the idea of allowing musicians to reserve new releases for paying subscribers, although it balked at doing so for Coldplay's latest album, according to a person familiar with the matter.

Such a move might push some users of Spotify's free version to upgrade to a \$10-a-month subscription. Artists and record labels have pressured Spotify to pay more for the music it streams.

A "paid-only" window might also increase album sales if it led more music fans to purchase music rather than wait months or years for it to become available via cumbersome free options involving ads or the use of computers instead of phones or tablets. It's also possible it could tempt more people to seek out pirated music.

The person familiar with the discussions wasn't authorized to speak publicly about the matter and spoke on condition of anonymity. Spotify's deliberations were reported earlier by The Wall Street Journal.

Spotify has argued its "freemium" model has been a highly effective tool for gaining new paying subscribers. The company is the global leader in music streaming, with 20 million paying customers and 75 million total active users.

But artists like Taylor Swift have said the free service devalues their work. Last year, after failing to win an exception to have her music only on Spotify's paid tier, she pulled all her music from the service, instead distributing it to paid-only streaming services such as Apple Music. Similarly, Adele withheld her latest album "25" from all streaming services, which may have helped it achieve 4.5 million album sales in its first two weeks in release.

Spotify spokesman Jonathan Prince said in a statement that "we explored a wide range of promotional options for the new Coldplay album and ultimately decided, together with management, that Coldplay and its fans would best be served with the full album on both free and premium this Friday."

The album was released for sale last week.

Spotify is "100 percent committed to our model because we believe that a free, ad-supported tier combined with a more robust premium tier is the best way to deliver music to fans," Prince said.

While it publicly has taken the line that its free and paid services must have the same music to attract new users, in negotiations, Spotify has expressed a willingness to test out different ways of releasing music, according to two people familiar with such talks. However, with few new big releases coming up this year, it's unclear when Spotify might start those tests. Spotify's free service is unusually generous, allowing users who are willing to tolerate a few ads to select an entire album for free playback on computers, or on mobile devices so long as the tracks are shuffled out of order. Other services like Internet radio giant Pandora randomize playback, making it impossible to listen to a single album all at once.

Spotify has already experimented in smaller ways with reserving music for paying customers. Earlier this year, the company didn't initially make the 10-minute track "The Globalist" from Muse's June release "Drones" freely available, one of the people said. That track is currently on both Spotify's free and paid tiers.

A stream from a paying subscriber earns artists and labels roughly 10 times what they'd receive from a non-paying user, one person said. □

Tech Review: Ditch your PC, if you're willing to suffer a little

ANICK JESDANUN

AP Technology Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Plenty of people do all their Facebooking, YouTubing, Web surfing and whatnot on mobile devices. But not everyone. Lots of us still rely on personal computers for plenty of tasks. Take writers, for instance, for whom a physical keyboard is often a must.

But the tech industry keeps trying to come up with lighter and cheaper alternatives to the traditional laptop. New gadgets from Apple, Microsoft and Google all harbor such ambitions, to varying degrees. Google's Pixel C tablet came out Tuesday. All have their shortcomings, though they offer some surprises as well.

Microsoft's Surface tablets aren't part of this review, basically because including them would be cheating.

Surfaces are full-fledged PCs already; they just feature magnetically attached keyboard covers in place of a built-in keyboard. Here, I was more interested in devices that weren't originally designed as PCs.

In fact, I avoided PCs for a full week to test out these alternatives.

IPAD PRO

I started with a bus ride from New York to Philadelphia. The seat had little leg-

room, yet Apple's iPad Pro (\$799 and up) felt comfortable on my lap, perched on a physical-keyboard cover (\$169) that folds into a kickstand.

The tablet ran Microsoft Word for writing and Excel for spreadsheets. All iPads now let you run apps side by side, something you can really only appreciate with the Pro's 12.9-inch screen. But it's still not possible to open multiple Word or Excel documents at once. To copy text from one to another, you still have to close the first document and open the second.

Adobe's Lightroom worked fine for basic photo editing, and the resulting images seemed more vivid on the iPad than on my years-old Mac laptop. But I needed the Mac to get the photos off my camera's memory card in the first place, as the iPad doesn't have an SD card slot.

The iPad easily handled much more prosaic tasks. Paying bills and organizing my photos online were also straightforward, although drag-and-drop features are tougher to use without a trackpad. I even scanned some documents via an app for my wireless Canon scanner.

Then came the reality check. On the Mac, I organize documents by folder to keep them straight. On the iPad, my options were limited to storing them in



The new Google Pixel C tablet is on display during a Google event, in San Francisco. The tech industry keeps trying to come up with lighter and cheaper alternatives to the traditional laptop, and new gadgets from Apple, Microsoft, Google and Asus all harbor such ambitions, to varying degrees. Google's Pixel C came out Tuesday, Dec. 8, 2015.

(AP Photo/Tony Avelar, File)

the iPad's photo gallery or emailing copies to myself. The iPad is meant to keep things simple. There's no messy folder system, and iPad apps are often limited to a subset of the features you can find on PCs. But work and life can be complex, and you sometimes need a device that can mirror that complexity. The Pro is a good supplement, but it's no laptop replacement.

PIXEL C

Google's Pixel C tablet (\$499 and up) has many laptop characteristics, in-

cluding a high-resolution screen and a keyboard (\$149) that attaches securely to the screen. You can hold the unit by either the tablet or the keyboard half — even upside down. The magnet is very strong, unlike that of Microsoft's Surface. The screen angle is also adjustable, unlike the iPad Pro.

Multiple people can share the Android-based Pixel; it's possible to set up individual profiles and save settings, unlike the iPad. But the Pixel can't display apps side-by-side, which makes copying text between

apps tougher.

The Pixel is easier to carry around, with its smaller, 10.2-inch screen. The keyboard is smaller to match. Rather than squeeze keys closer together, the Pixel moves less-used characters, such as brackets, to an on-screen display.

The Pixel can run many of the apps that the iPad can, and it faces similar challenges with file management and trackpad-less drag and drop.

LUMIA 950

Microsoft's Lumia 950 (\$599) is a phone that can turn into a desktop PC of sorts when attached to the company's Display Dock (\$99) — a 2.5-inch square box that hooks up to a TV or external monitor. You can connect a keyboard and mouse as well.

The setup is novel, but you have to buy and carry around the dock, along with extra cords and your own keyboard-mouse combo. Using a TV as a monitor presents a distance problem: Either you're too close to the screen if you're working from a nearby desk, or you're too far away on a couch or hotel bed.

A laptop is easier to stow. Using this is like setting up an actual desktop, even if it's running off your phone. The software is clunky, too. Many Windows apps won't work on the phone. □

Apple CEO: More computer science and coding education needed

BREE FOWLER

AP Technology Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Teaching kids to code is just as important as teaching them any other language. And the younger they start learning it, the better, Apple CEO Tim Cook said Wednesday. Cook spoke to a group of New York third graders who visited a Manhattan Apple store for an "Hour of Code" class. In an interview afterward, he said that schools aren't putting enough emphasis on computer-science education, but he has "great hope" that will change and coding will ultimately become a re-

quired class for all kids.

"From an economic standpoint the job segment itself today is huge, but it's going to become even larger," Cook said. And if the concepts are introduced at a young age, in a fun way, it's more likely that kids will find them cool and stay interested as they grow older, hopefully resulting in a larger and more diverse tech workforce down the road, he said. Cook added that even if kids don't grow up to get a lucrative job in the tech industry, they'll discover a new way to be creative and pick up important problem-solving



Apple CEO Tim Cook, standing right, and Apple software engineer and Vice President Cheryl Thomas, center, pose for a group photo with third grade students at an Apple Store after participating in a coding class, Wednesday, Dec. 9, 2015 in New York.

(AP Photo/Mark Lennihan)

skills along the way. The kids at Wednesday's event played with a Star Wars-themed game created by the non-profit group Code.org in partnership with Disney. On iPad Minis, they used basic drag-and-drop commands to program their droid to do things like pick up scrap metal and evade Stormtroopers.

Their teacher, Joann Khan, said Wednesday's introduction to coding was probably a first for most of her students, noting that her school, located in Manhattan's East Harlem neighborhood, no longer has a computer lab. □

Commodity giant Glencore cuts debt ahead of schedule

JAMEY KEATEN
Associated Press

GENEVA (AP) — Grappling with a severe slump in metals prices, commodities group Glencore said Wednesday that its three-month-old plan to cut its towering debt is ahead of schedule thanks to asset sales, production cuts, cost reductions and

other tactics to improve its burdened balance sheet. The Swiss-based producer of zinc, copper, nickel and other commodities, said it has achieved \$8.7 billion in reductions under a \$10.2 billion plan announced in September to cut debt and issue shares as its share price plunged amid market

weakness along with generally sluggish economic growth worldwide. CEO Ivan Glasenberg said Glencore is aiming to now cut net debt by almost \$3 billion to \$13 billion by end of 2016. It's now targeting debt of \$18 billion to 19 billion by then, down from the low \$20 billion range that had

been previously sought. "Glencore is well placed to continue to be cash generative in the current environment — and at even lower prices. We retain a high degree of flexibility and will continue to review the need to act further as required," Glasenberg said in a statement. In a con-

ference call later, he said that the company retains a number of "levers" to pull if needed. Vowing to press on with the deleveraging, Glasenberg said: "We definitely don't want to get into this situation again ... We're halfway through the journey, and we've still got work to do." □

Energy stocks, beaten down all week, push market higher

BERNARD CONDON
AP Business Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Investors took a chance on some beaten-down shares on Thursday, helping the U.S. stock market to its first gain in four days. The gain was modest, but broad, with eight of the 10 industry sectors of the Standard and Poor's 500 index ending higher. Drillers and other energy companies, down sharply in previous days, climbed 0.6 percent, much more than the rest of the market. Among individual stocks, Chevron rose nearly 2 percent.

Some suppliers of raw materials posted gains, too. Aluminum giant Alcoa and miner Freeport-McMoRan each rose 5 percent.

The climb came despite a continuing slump in the price of commodities that has been rattling markets all year. Benchmark U.S. crude oil fell to another seven-year low.

The Dow Jones industrial average climbed 82.45 points, or 0.5 percent, to 17,574.75. The S&P 500 index rose 4.61 points, or

0.2 percent, to 2,052.23. The Nasdaq composite increased 22.31 points, or 0.4 percent, to 5,045.17.

Natural gas and coal producer Consol Energy jumped 10 percent. It's still the biggest loser in the S&P 500 this year, however, down 78 percent.

In economic news, applications for unemployment benefits in the U.S. rose last week, but the number of Americans seeking aid remains close to historic lows. The report comes a week before the Federal Reserve is expected to raise interest rates for the first time in nine years. That would signal the central bank is confident the economy is strong enough to withstand higher borrowing costs.

"There is a fear over the market. China is slowing, emerging markets are slowing," said James Duni-gan, chief investment strategist at PNC Wealth Management. "But if the Fed can say we're comfortable with U.S. employment and economic growth, that will be a positive."

The price of crude oil fell



Trader Patrick Casey, center, works on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange. Investors took a chance on some beaten-down shares on Thursday, helping the U.S. stock market to its first gain in four days.
(AP Photo/Richard Drew)

40 cents, or 1 percent, to \$36.76 a barrel in New York. Oil is trading at its lowest level since early 2009.

The upside to lower oil is that consumers save money at the gas pump, giving them more money to spend at stores and elsewhere. But that boost hasn't helped much yet.

"You just don't have any-

thing to show in retail sales or consumer spending," said James Paulsen, chief investment strategist at Wells Capital Management. "Where is the stimulus from lower oil?"

Among other stocks making big moves, Men's Wearhouse plunged \$3.12, or 17 percent, to \$15.27 after reporting earnings per share

that were half what financial analysts expected, according to FactSet. The struggling clothes chain is down 65 percent since the start of 2015. First Solar dropped \$4.50, or nearly eight percent, to \$54.35 after the solar energy company released earnings and a forecast that disappointed investors. □

Men's Wearhouse struggles continue, stock tumbles

NEW YORK (AP) — Men's Wearhouse's is struggling as it tries to figure out the best strategy for its business since buying rival Jos. A. Bank.

The men's clothing retailer reported Wednesday that sales at Jos. A. Bank locations open at least a year tumbled 14.6 percent in the third quarter as fewer customers visited those shops. This metric is a key gauge of a retailer's health because it excludes results

from locations recently opened or closed.

Its shares dropped almost 18 percent in afternoon trading. For the quarter to date, which includes part of the critical holiday shopping season, Jos. A. Bank same-store sales were down 35.1 percent while the company's other brands average same-store sales were up 5.5 percent. Men's Wearhouse Inc. said that if Jos. A. Bank continues to have troubles

for the rest of the quarter the company will be at risk of missing the lower end of its full-year outlook. Men's Wearhouse CEO Doug Ewert said in a written statement that after buying Jos. A. Bank, Men's Wearhouse knew that it had to work on the promotions that the brand offered. It got rid of the "buy one suit, get three free" promotion that Jos. A. Bank used to offer. But Ewert said Men's Wearhouse underestimated how

much doing away with such promotions would impact Jos. A. Bank's near-term performance. The pains that Men's Wearhouse Inc. is experiencing seem similar to those that J.C. Penney Co. has experienced. The department store operator had tried to reinvent itself under former CEO Ron Johnson by getting rid of most sales and some basic merchandise. But it led to billions in losses and sales declines. John-

son was eventually ousted and Mike Ullman came out of retirement to help the business with its recovery efforts. Ewert maintains that the steps being taken at Jos. A. Bank are necessary and will help the business grow. The executive said that it is trying to re-engage with current Jos. A. Bank customers while also looking to bring back shoppers that have left the brand and draw in new customers. □

STREET BRIEFS

Amazon brings the hooch in NYC in 60 minutes

NEW YORK (AP) — Amazon.com is getting into the holiday spirit, adding booze to its one-hour delivery service in Manhattan. Until now it was only Seattle, the company's hometown, which could imbibe within 60 minutes via Amazon. The company would not say Thursday if it was expanding that convenience elsewhere. The one-hour delivery costs \$7.99, but it's free to members of Amazon's \$99 annual Prime loyalty program who can handle a two-hour wait. Beer, wine and spirits delivered in Manhattan will come from the food market Eataly. Alcohol is one of 4,000 new items the online retailer just added its Prime Now delivery, in addition to toys, electronics, wrapping paper and baking supplies. There are already more than a million things that can be delivered by Amazon in 20 U.S. metropolitan areas. □

US Fed approves Bank of America capital base plan

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Federal Reserve has approved Bank of America Corp.'s revised plan for building a sturdy capital base, saying the bank has made progress in filling gaps in its plan. The Fed announced Thursday that it wasn't objecting to the new plan filed by the second-largest U.S. bank. Bank of America passed its annual stress test in March. But the Fed gave the bank only conditional approval to raise dividends and buy back shares, because of what the regulators saw as weaknesses in its capital plan dealing with risks and possible losses. At the same time, the bank was allowed to increase dividends and repurchase shares. But it had to submit a new plan showing how it is building a strong financial foundation to withstand a major economic downturn. □

Wal-Mart to launch own mobile pay system

A. D'INNOCENZIO

AP Retail Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — The mobile payment wars are heating up.

Wal-Mart Stores Inc., the world's largest retailer, said it's launching its own mobile payment system that will allow shoppers to pay with any major credit or debit card or its own store gift card through its existing smartphone app at the cash register.

It started testing the new payment feature Thursday at its stores in the Bentonville, Arkansas area, where the retailer is based. It plans to launch the payment system called Walmart Pay in all 4,500-plus U.S. stores in early next year.

It's part of Wal-Mart's overall mobile strategy to making shopping easier and faster, but the launch is the latest salvo in the battle for mobile payments that's in the early stages. Wal-Mart has moved into the field as Apple's one-year-old tap-and-pay system is being expanded to other merchants like Best Buy and KFC and several months after Google launched the Android Pay mobile wallet app and Samsung came out with Samsung Pay. They're all trying to get a piece of what could be a very lucrative business, but none of them have cracked the market so far. The move signals that Walmart believes it's best to build its own system to better serve its customers, even as it backs a retail industrywide mobile pay-

ment program that is in test phase.

"We are creating a seamless shopping experience

could have their online orders ready for pickup.

Wal-Mart executives said that after evaluating vari-

a blow to Merchant Customer Exchange, or MCX, set up a few years ago by a consortium of retailers



A worker pushes shopping carts in front of a Wal-Mart store in La Habra, Calif. The world's largest retailer, said it's testing its own mobile payment system that will allow shoppers to pay with any major credit or debit card or its own store gift card through its app at the cash register. It will start testing the new payment system Thursday, Dec. 10, 2015 at its stores in the Bentonville, Ark. area, where the retailer is based.
(AP Photo/Jae C. Hong)

that includes payment," Neil Ashe, president and CEO of Wal-Mart's global eCommerce, told reporters on a conference call on Wednesday. "It's fast. It's simple, and it's a secure way for customers to use their smartphone."

Twenty-two million customers use the Wal-Mart app each month, and more than half of Wal-Mart's online orders are now coming from a mobile device. This holiday season, Wal-Mart added new features like allowing online shoppers to check in once they get to the parking lot so they

ous mobile options, they found that they had different constraints, working only on certain devices or payment types. Apple Pay requires iPhones. But Google's own tap-and-pay services, Android Pay and Samsung's Samsung Pay require Android phones. However, Ashe and Daniel Eckert, Wal-Mart's senior vice president of services, told reporters the system is designed to integrate with other payment applications like Apple Pay — if the retailer decides to include them.

Wal-Mart's move could be

and restaurants to create an industrywide mobile payment system. Wal-Mart has been a key player. But Wal-Mart executives told reporters they remain excited about the MCX pilot program for the payment system called "CurrentC." A pilot test is being conducted in Columbus, Ohio, and it involves Wal-Mart and 10 other retailers.

Nevertheless, Eckert noted, "We are listening to the needs of the customer. We are looking at innovating the checkout experience and using payment to do that." □

Michigan maker of Jiffy Mix planning \$35M expansion

CHELSEA, Mich. (AP) — The Michigan-based maker of Jiffy Mix baking mixes plans a \$35 million expansion as part of an effort to diversify the business.

Chelsea Milling Co. plans a new mixing tower that will eventually be attached to a new packaging plant and support building, The Ann Arbor News reported. The company plans to keep making boxes of mix for retail sale while boosting institutional and food-service sales.

Howdy Holmes, the fourth-generation owner of Chelsea Milling, said the expansion comes as more people are eating away from home. "More people want to go out to eat, they're eating in restaurants, in their cars, and as things change we need to reinvent ourselves," Holmes said. Jiffy pulls in more than \$130 million annually in total revenue and doesn't advertise, preferring to develop relationships with retailers and rely

on brand recognition. Under the plans, the company will make and sell more 50-pound sacks of mixes. In addition to mixing ingredients, Jiffy creates its own packaging in-house and mills its own flour.

The new mixing tower will allow Jiffy to increase production from 120 million pounds per month to more than 350 million pounds per month. The new equipment will be more automated, Holmes said, allowing more production with

fewer employees.

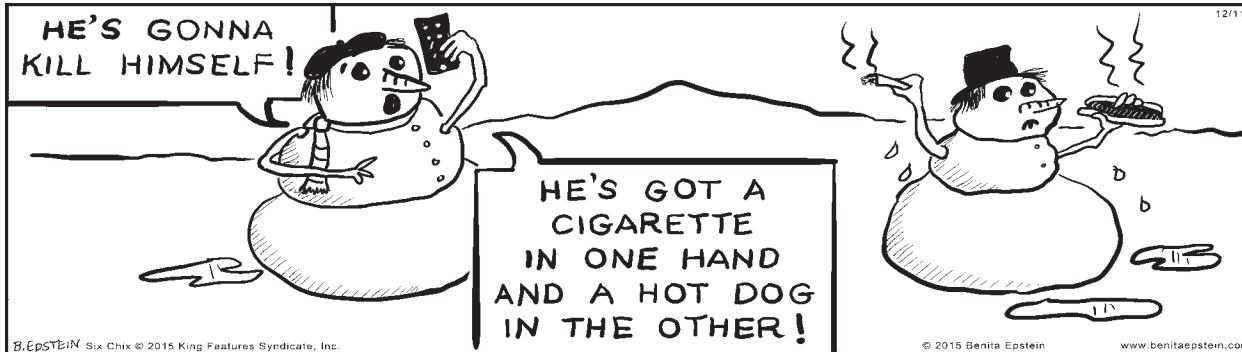
The company's workforce likely will decline from about 315 employees to about 240, Holmes said, but that will be done without layoffs. He said about half of the company's workers are approaching retirement age, so when they leave old jobs won't be filled.

"We could have done this and forced people out of their jobs, but that's not how we wanted to do it," Holmes said. □

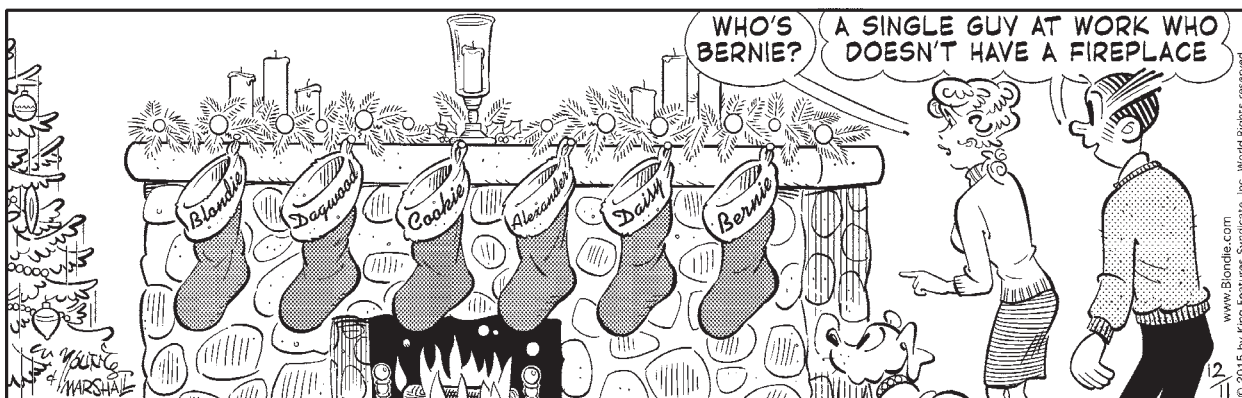
Mutts



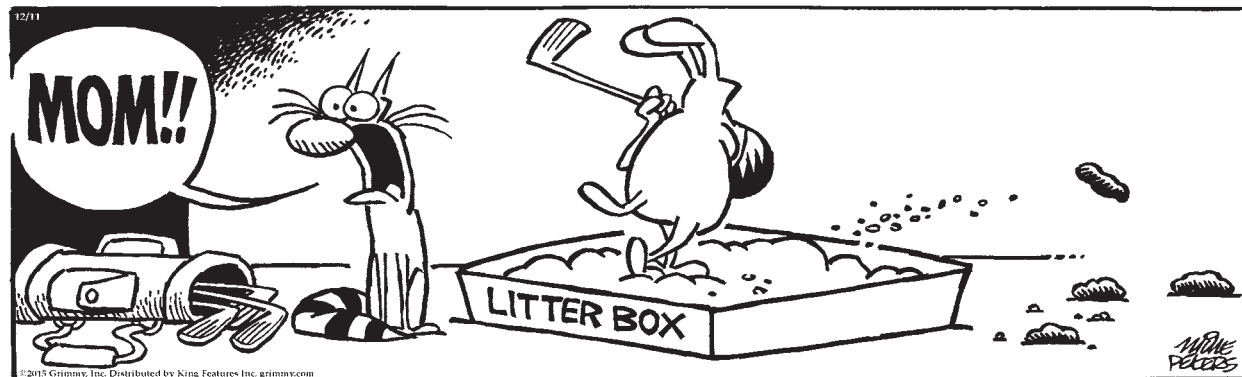
6 Chix



Blondie



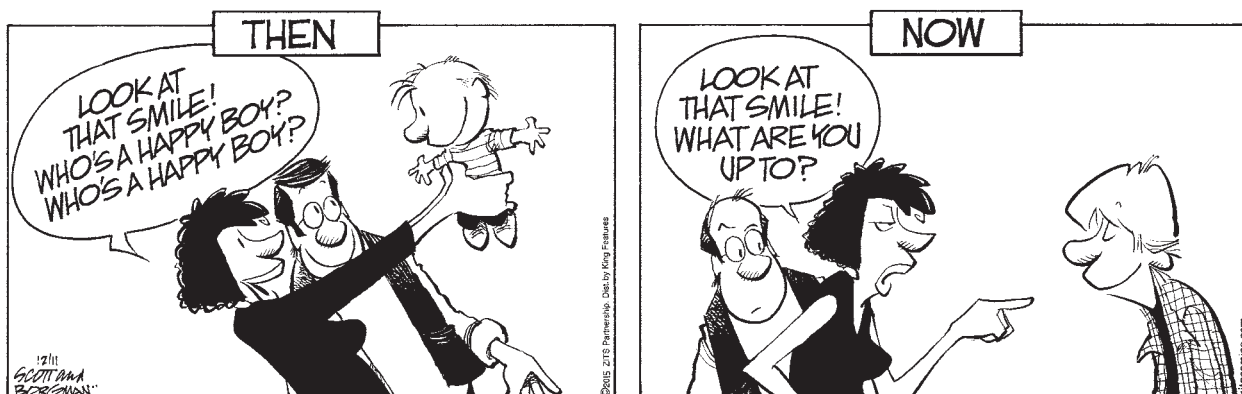
Mother Goose & Grimm



Baby Blues



Zits



Conceptis Sudoku

				5		8		
	9		7				3	
5		1				2		
			9		4		7	
6								4
	4		2		3			
		9				3		1
	5				1		9	
		3		7				

Difficulty Level ★★★★★

12/11

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Sunday.

Yesterday's puzzle answer

3	1	9	5	6	2	4	7	8
6	4	8	1	7	9	5	3	2
5	7	2	3	8	4	1	6	9
1	9	4	2	5	6	3	8	7
8	6	5	4	3	7	2	9	1
7	2	3	9	1	8	6	4	5
9	3	6	7	2	5	8	1	4
4	5	1	8	9	3	7	2	6
2	8	7	6	4	1	9	5	3

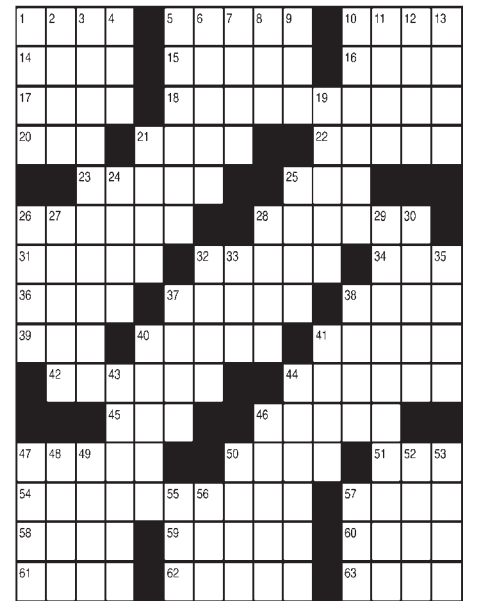
ACROSS

- Gray wolf
- Actress
- Moorehead
- Arthur of tennis
- Pancake house
- ___ change;
- pocket coins
- Brutal ruffian
- Soil
- Agreeing
- Layer of turf
- Prepare to be photographed
- Sty cries
- Overdo the role
- One of the Seven Dwarfs
- Ma or Pa
- Hershey's chocolate bits
- Ease, as someone's fear
- "Home on the"

- Prefix for west or section
- Work hard
- Vatican leaders
- Nimble
- Bart, to Homer
- Fill with joy
- Free-for-all
- Snail's tentacle
- Beauty parlors
- ___ number on; treat badly
- Lollygag
- Undress
- Gigantic
- Social insect
- Sickening
- Follow orders
- Additionally
- Explorer ___ de León
- Angry criticism
- Secluded valley
- Concluded
- Celebration

DOWN

- Tupperware tops
- Toledo's state
- Marginal; questionably qualified



Created by Jacqueline E. Mathews

12/11/15

Thursday's Puzzle Solved

CLAD	ADAPT	AWLS
LIKE	DAFOE	ROOT
OMIT	INTER	TOGA
PANACEA	TRAILER	
	IOU	BRADS
SCALD	FRY	LACES
URNS	LOA	CINEMA
AUG	TAXICAB	SOB
VEERED	DOT	HATE
ELLEN	REP	SORER
	TOTED	MAN
UMPIRES	PAGODAS	
PEAR	ACTOR	RICH
ONCE	CURSE	ECHO
NUKE	HEATS	DEEP

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12/11/15

- "Guilty" or "Not guilty"
- Get cash for
- Run and wed
- Man or boy
- Light bulb inventor
- Drooped
- Dumbbell
- Obstacle
- Over six feet
- Trick
- Female deer
- Orderly
- Little child
- Orang or chimp
- 2000 pounds
- Mistaken

Paris: New draft climate deal emerges as talks near end

**KARL RITTER
SYLVIE CORBET
Associated Press**

LE BOURGET, France (AP) — French Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius on Thursday presented a new draft of a global climate accord that showed headway on some key issues and stalemate on others as the talks outside Paris headed into the final stretch.

The 27-page draft — two pages shorter than a previous version — included a long-term goal of keeping global warming “well below” 2 degrees Celsius (3.6 degrees F), while pursuing efforts to limit the temperature rise to 1.5 degrees C. The draft also said governments would aim to peak the emissions of heat-trapping greenhouse gases “as soon as possible” and strive to reach “emissions neutrality” by the second half of the century.

That was weaker language than in previous drafts that included more specific emissions cuts and timeframes. Emissions neutrality wasn't defined in the text. Previous versions have included similar terms that are generally understood to mean no more emissions than the Earth can naturally absorb. The issue appeared far from settled, however, with one negotiator from a developed country saying his delegation would “push back” on the long-term goal. He spoke on condition of anonymity because the talks were ongoing. Fabius, who is leading the talks, told negotiators to review the



Oxfam activists wear masks of from left, U.S. President Barack Obama, Chinese President Xi Jinping, French President Francois Hollande, India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi, German Chancellor Angela Merkel and Australia's Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull as they stage a protest during the COP21, United Nations Climate Change Conference in Le Bourget, north of Paris, Thursday, Dec. 10, 2015.

(AP Photo/Christophe Ena)

draft and come back in two hours to continue the talks. The Paris conference was scheduled to end on Friday, but the annual U.N. talks rarely finish on time.

“I think, I hope that by the end of this night we'll have a draft of the final text,” Fabius said. “We are much closer.” Diplomats from 196 governments are trying to forge a global pact in Paris

to slow global warming by collectively slashing emissions, mostly from the burning oil, coal and gas for energy. The biggest challenge is to define the responsibilities of wealthy nations, which have polluted the most historically, and developing economies including China and India where emissions are growing the fastest. □

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Classifieds

TIMESHARE FOR SALE RENAISSANCE

Week	room	price
wk 38	room 529	\$4,750
wk 40	room 336	\$3,750
wk 40	room 105	\$5,000
wk 42	room 338	\$4,000
wk 43	room 329	\$3,250
wk 49	room 144	\$5,500
wk 49	room 571	\$3,750
wk 49	room 2571	\$3,750
wk 48	room 517	\$3,750
wk 48 or 49	room 119	\$4,750
wk 48 or 49	room 551	\$5,500
wk 49 or 50	room 203	\$5,500
wk 21 or 22	room 347	\$4,000
wk 51	room 347	\$12,500

Contact Brian Cell: 593-0200
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7 half-pound mutts become first test-tube puppies in world

SUE MANNING
Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — A team of veterinarians, scientists and lab workers gathered around a surrogate hound and watched her give birth to seven half-pound puppies, the first dogs ever conceived in a test tube.

"We each took a puppy and rubbed it with a little towel and when it started to squiggle and cry, we knew we had success," said Dr. Alexander Travis, who runs the lab at the Baker Institute for Animal Health at Cornell University's College of Veterinary Medicine in Ithaca, New York.

"Their eyes were closed. They were just adorable, cute, with smooshed-in faces. We checked them to make sure they looked normal and were all breathing," he said.

The puppies born July 10 are a mix of beagle, Labrador and cocker spaniel and are now healthy 5-month-olds, Travis said. All but one female were adopted. She's being kept by the lab to have her own litter.

The lab kept track of the puppies by painting their nails with different color polish. Travis adopted two, still known by their nail polish names, Red and Green.



This photo shows seven week-old puppies born by in vitro fertilization at the Baker Institute for Animal Health in Ithaca, N.Y. The advancement opens the door for conserving endangered species of canids and for eradicating heritable diseases in dogs.

(Michael Carroll/Cornell via AP)

In vitro fertilization, the process of fertilizing an egg with sperm outside the body, is widely used to assist human reproduction these days. The first human birth from IVF took place in 1978.

But IVF efforts with dogs repeatedly failed until now, according to Dr. Pierre Comizzoli, a reproductive physiologist for the Smithsonian Conservation Biology Institute in Front Royal, Virginia, which works with Cornell.

"The biology of the dog is really, really different than humans," Comizzoli said.

Dog pregnancies last only two months and females go into heat just once or twice a year, releasing immature eggs instead of mature eggs needed for IVF.

An earlier experiment at Cornell helped pave the way. In 2013 at Cornell, Klondike became the first puppy born from a frozen embryo. Klondike's beagle mother was fertilized using artificial insemination. Her embryos were collected, frozen and implanted in Klondike's surrogate mother.

Comizzoli described the

birth of the seven puppies "as a huge breakthrough." A paper describing the Cornell litter as "the first live births from in vitro fertilized embryos in the dog" appeared Tuesday in the PLOS ONE journal. The lead author, Smithsonian Conservation Biology Institute doctoral fellow Jennifer Nagashima, said IVF technology in dogs could prove useful in everything from conserving endangered species to removing "deleterious traits from breeds," with research potentially applicable to "models for human disease" as well. □

Are you grumpy? At least it won't shorten your life

MARIA CHENG
AP Medical Writer

LONDON (AP) — There's good news for grumpy women: Being happy apparently has no effect on how long you might live. That's the conclusion of the latest attempt to find out if happy people live longer. Previous studies have linked happiness to longevity but researchers now say there's no such scientific connection. So while being sick makes you unhappy, just being grouchy isn't enough to make you ill or shorten your life.

The results are based on questionnaires from more than 715,000 British women aged 50 to 69 who were enrolled in a national breast cancer screening program in the late 1990s. The women were asked things like how often they felt happy and how healthy they were. Nearly 40 percent of the women said they were happy most of the time while 17 percent said they were unhappy.

After a decade of tracking the women, 4 percent had died.

Scientists found the death rate among unhappy women was the same as those who were happy. The research was published online Wednesday in the medical journal *Lancet*.

"It's such a common belief that stress and unhappiness causes death and disease but it's actually the other way around," said Richard Peto, a professor at the University of Oxford who was one of the study's authors.

"People should focus on the real issues that shorten their lives, like smoking and obesity." □

SpaceX:

Launches may resume Dec. 19, 6 months after accident

MARCIA DUNN
AP Aerospace Writer

CAPE CANAVERAL, Florida (AP) — SpaceX says it's close to launching rockets again six months after an accident.

Chief executive Elon Musk announced via Twitter on

Thursday a rocket test-firing for next Wednesday in Florida. A satellite launch for Orbcomm could come three days later — Dec. 19th. SpaceX has been stuck on Earth since June, when a broken strut doomed its Falcon rocket during lift-

off. The accident left NASA without a viable U.S. supplier for the International Space Station. NASA's other commercial shipper, Orbital ATK, finally made a delivery Wednesday, but had to use another company's rocket.

SpaceX hopes to resume supply runs next month. In the meantime, SpaceX will try again to land its first-stage booster, possibly back at Cape Canaveral Air Force Station. Barge landing attempts have failed. □

Streaming service Netflix leads in Golden Globes nominations



This image shows Wagner Moura as Pablo Escobar in the Netflix Original Series "Narcos." The series was nominated for a Golden Globe award for best television drama on Thursday, Dec. 10, 2015. Moura was also nominated for best actor in a TV drama series. The 73rd Annual Golden Globes will be held on Jan. 10, 2016.

(Daniel Daza/Netflix via AP)

FRAZIER MOORE AP Television Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — The folks at TV's Big Four networks might as well have slept in Thursday morning and skipped the announcement of the Golden Globes nominations.

In the latest sign of their lack of critical love and viewer sizzle, commercial broadcasters ABC, CBS, Fox and NBC together scored a paltry nine nods (though three more than last year), while streaming service Netflix boosted its total from last year's seven to singlehandedly claim the lead with nine nominations distributed across six series ("Narcos," "Orange Is the New Black," "Grace and Frankie," "Bloodline," "House of Cards" and "Master of None") plus its original film, "Beast of No Nation."

Fellow streaming video outlet Amazon snagged five nominations (up from two

last year) and Hulu scored its first. Grand total for digital on-demand outlets: 15. With its two nominations, tiny broadcast outlet CW beat CBS' single mention (for supporting dramatic actor Alan Cumming in "The Good Wife") as well as NBC (which will air the Globes awards cast on Jan. 10, but was completely snubbed on Thursday by the Globes).

CW's "Jane the Virgin" leading lady Gina Rodriguez — last year's winner — and "Crazy Ex-Girlfriend" star Rachel Bloom are pitted against each other in the musical or comedy actress category. Broadcast networks were shut out altogether in the music or comedy series category, where they used to glow.

"Casual," on Hulu, shares the category with "Mozart in the Jungle" and "Transparent" (both on Amazon), "Orange is the New Black"

(Netflix), and "Silicon Valley" and "Veep" (HBO).

The nominees for best drama series include only Fox's breakout hit "Empire" among broadcast networks, plus USA's "Mr. Robot," Netflix's "Narcos," Starz' "Outlander" and "Game of Thrones" on HBO.

Even pay-cable network HBO, which traditionally ruled at awards time, has been humbled by this year's digital invasion. It has seven nominations, down from 15 last year.

Premium rival Showtime suffered a falloff, too, with last year's nine nominations shrinking to three.

But Starz, which had two nominations last year, enjoyed a happy uptick to six, spread across its series "Flesh & Bone," "Blunt Talk" and time-travel romance "Outlander," which got three nominations, including best drama, best actress (Caitriona Balfe) and

best supporting actor (Tobias Menzies).

Fox, shut out last year, landed four nominations thanks to two for "Empire," plus Rob Lowe in the comedy actor category on its freshman "The Grinder" and Jamie Lee Curtis in its new horror-comedy "Scream Queens."

The most nominations for any show was three, scored by USA's quirky thriller "Mr. Robot" along with ABC's

prestige drama "American Crime," FX's "Fargo," Starz' "Outlander," PBS' miniseries "Wolf Hall" and the much-honored Amazon comedy "Transparent."

The Hollywood Foreign Press Association, which bestows the Golden Globes, exhibited a lack of sentiment for AMC's "Mad Men," which completed its stellar run last season. Only Jon Hamm, in the dramatic actor category, was saluted. □

Madonna gives impromptu concert in Paris

PARIS (AP) — Pop star Madonna has staged an impromptu concert at Paris' Republique plaza to honor victims of the Nov. 13 attacks in which 130 people died.

The singer, who had just finished her show in Par-

is Wednesday evening, tweeted to her fans: "Im singing some songs in place de la republique. Meet me there now."

Accompanied by a guitarist, she performed songs including John Lennon's "Imagine" — a song that

became an unofficial anthem in the aftermath of the attacks.

The iconic statue at Republique, transformed into an informal memorial since the attacks, is piled with flowers and candles left by passers-by. □

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MON-THURS 9:35
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Streisand upstaged by Katzenberg at breakfast event

SANDY COHEN

AP Entertainment Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Barbra Streisand was the guest of honor at the annual Women in Entertainment breakfast Wednesday, but it was Hollywood publicist Nanci Ryder and studio chief Jeffrey Katzenberg who moved the audience most.

Ryder, who was diagnosed with Lou Gehrig's disease last year, appeared with Katzenberg at the industry event. Because she can no longer speak, he read a statement she had written, and as he did, Ryder wailed and dabbed her eyes with Kleenex. By the time he finished the statement, he was crying, too, as were most of the guests at Milk Studios, where the breakfast was held.

"I aspire to be half the person you are," Katzenberg told Ryder through tears.

In her statement, Ryder urged the entertainment powerhouses at the Hollywood Reporter's annual Power 100 breakfast to work together to create gender equity in the industry.

"I wish my disease were as easy to fix as this," she wrote.

Beyond its annual Power 100 list of the most influential women in Hollywood, the Hollywood Reporter's Women in Entertainment initiative includes a mentorship program, which pairs girls in underserved areas of Los Angeles



Nanci Ryder, left, and Jeffrey Katzenberg attend the The Hollywood Reporter's Women in Entertainment Breakfast at Milk Studios on Dec. 9, 2015, in Los Angeles. (Photo by Jordan Strauss/Invision/AP)

les with female Hollywood executives for a year of mentoring.

Singer Meghan Trainor announced at Wednesday's breakfast that three of those girls would receive

full academic scholarships to Loyola Marymount University, inspiring another round of tears in the room. "I never thought I would get to go to college," one honoree said through sobs.

The audience was cried out by the time Streisand took the stage to accept the Sherry Lansing Leadership Award, saying she's angry that women are still so underrepresented in Hollywood, politics and medical research.

"Gender discrimination drives me crazy," Streisand said. "Women are still treated as second-class citizens in the workplace and equal representation in Congress."

One area where women outpace men is in death from heart disease, she said. Streisand endowed her namesake Women's Heart Center at Cedars-Sinai in 2012 to conduct research and develop treatments specifically for women's cardiac conditions.

"In the last 55 years, almost all research has been done on men," she said. "Gender inequality even extends to mice in the labs: They're all male! So even female mice are discriminated against."

Like Ryder, Streisand encouraged the powerful people in the room, including the young women receiving college scholarships, to unite and speak up for gender equality.

"Our instinct for love and compassion is something that this world, this chaotic world, needs more than ever," Streisand said. "Speak up until women are treated equally by the people who pay us, by the people who heal us, and

POP LIFE

Matt Damon will give speech at MIT commencement

CAMBRIDGE, Mass. (AP) —

Matt Damon shot to fame in the 1997 movie "Good Will Hunting" as a gifted janitor at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Now, he has been selected to deliver the university's 2016 commencement address. MIT announced Thursday that the Academy Award-winning actor, filmmaker, social activist and Cambridge native will address graduates on June 3. Damon said in a statement that it's an honor to be named commencement speaker "at a school that I couldn't have gotten into." MIT President L. Rafael Reif says Damon has "made us think about our world in new ways, and through his service, he has made it a better place." Anish Punjabi, president of MIT's Class of 2016, says Damon is an inspiration to students who teaches that the world needs more well-rounded leaders.

Actor Kirk Douglas donates \$15 million toward care center

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Actor Kirk Douglas and his wife have donated \$15 million toward a Motion Picture Television Fund campus in Woodland Hills, California, to help build a care center for Hollywood industry members suffering from Alzheimer's disease. The Los Angeles Daily News reports that the center will be named after Douglas and is expected to cost \$35 million in total. Officials announced Wednesday — Douglas's 99th birthday — that his gift will kick the design and planning of the new facility into high gear. Douglas was born Issur Danielovitch in 1916 in Amsterdam, New York. He changed his name to Kirk Douglas as he started his acting career. The cleft-chin leading man went on to receive three Academy Award nominations and starred in such Hollywood classics as "Spartacus" and "Lust for Life." □

Joan Collins says Christmas bittersweet without Jackie

LEANNE ITALIE

Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Christmas will be bittersweet for Dame Joan Collins coming so soon after the death of her sister, Jackie.

"I'm still missing my sister a lot," she said, her voice softening during an interview this week. "Her children and her grandchildren miss her terribly, as does our brother, Bill."

Jackie Collins lost her battle with breast cancer Sept. 19 at age 77. Older sister Joan will be with Jackie's three children and other loved

ones for the holidays.

"We were three siblings. We used to call ourselves the Three Musketeers," Collins said. "Her children are wonderful and we're all going to be together in London for Christmas having the traditional family Christmas with the turkey and the cake and the presents. It won't be the same without Jackie, but we're gonna do it."

At 82, the "Dynasty" star who built a badass reputation on her vengeful Alexis Carrington Colby character is as busy as ever on the

professional front.

She has a recurring role as the sassy Grand Duchess Alexandra of Oxford on E!'s over-the-top "The Royals." The author of numerous books, Collins released "The St. Tropez Lonely Hearts Club" in November. It's a satirical murder-mystery novel that unfolds during high season among the rich and richer on the Côte d'Azur.

And she's been busy, too, in her closets. She's putting about 450 personal and professional items on the auction block, includ-

ing some of her "Dynasty" dresses, elegant furniture and jewelry.

The sale will be held Dec. 16 by the Beverly Hills, California, house Julien's Auctions.

"I'm very into clothes, I'm very into fashion and I never buy anything unless I really, really love it so it's always a little difficult for me to get rid of things," Collins said. "But you can't hang on to things."

Also included in the sale: Two love letters written to her by Warren Beatty in 1960. □

'Chew' host Symon to open eatery in Atlantic City

WAYNE PARRY
Associated Press

ATLANTIC CITY, N.J. (AP)

— Celebrity chef Michael Symon, co-host of ABC's "The Chew" TV show, will open an Italian restaurant at Atlantic City's Borgata casino next fall.

Symon joins fellow Iron Chefs Bobby Flay and Geoffrey Zakarian and legendary chef Wolfgang Puck among the celebrity chefs with eateries at the casino.

"We're excited to bring our Italian cooking to Atlantic City," said Symon, who has award-winning restaurants in Cleveland, Detroit and elsewhere. "This is the food

I grew up eating; my Sicilian grandmother would be proud! Authentic Italian is very simple. It's all about great ingredients. It's what

I cooked in my early career, and still what I like to make at home." Symon made his TV debut on the Food Network

in 1998 with appearances on "Sara's Secrets" with Sara Moulton; "Ready, Set, Cook," and "Food Nation with Bobby Flay," before hosting over 100 episodes of "The Melting Pot." In January 2012, his show "Symon's Suppers," premiered on the Cooking Channel, and in September 2011 he joined the cast of "The Chew" as one of the show's five hosts.

"Having the opportunity to partner with such a celebrated chef to join our renowned culinary lineup, and whose personality and spirit embody Borgata was something we could not pass up, and look forward to next fall," said Joe Lupo, the casino's senior vice president. The name of the restaurant has not yet been determined. □



Audience members applaud Iron Chef Michael Symon, co-host of ABC's "The Chew," in New York. Symon will open an Italian restaurant at Atlantic City's Borgata casino in fall 2016. Symon joins fellow Iron Chefs Bobby Flay and Geoffrey Zakarian and legendary chef Wolfgang Puck among celebrity chefs with eateries at the casino.

(AP Photo/Tina Fineberg)

How 'Star Wars' John Boyega got Iron Man as a mentor

LINDSEY BAHR
AP Film Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — John Boyega needed help.

The 23-year-old star of "Star Wars: The Force Awakens" was starting to question a lot of things about what life would hold now that he was part of what's expected to be one of the biggest films of all time.

The British-born actor wasn't a complete unknown when he was cast, like his co-star Daisy Ridley, but it was a stratospheric jump to go from the 2011 cult favorite "Attack the Block" to suddenly being one of the key players in launching this new iteration of a multi-billion dollar franchise. It wasn't regret. Boyega had gone through a grueling seven months of auditions to get here and was a massive fan going in. But now he was being tested in ways that no acting school could offer. For one, he wasn't even allowed to take his script home to memorize dialogue. The hyper-secrecy of the project required that the scripts stay on the London set.

To get around this, he'd occasionally record the response dialogue on his phone so that he could rehearse elsewhere. One night as his driver was pulling off the lot, he started practicing and realized he

couldn't remember a thing. So they turned around, went back to Pinewood Studios and Boyega stayed late into the night studying his lines.

"I really do think that God sent Jesus personally to help me with that," Boyega said. "Lord have mercy,

Ford, Carrie Fisher and Mark Hamill with questions about their experiences and how they handled their light speed ascendancy to otherworldly stardom.

"They're my co-stars and we were in a working environment," said Boyega. "It's not a place for teach-

fame. So he sent an email to Downey's agent saying, essentially, "Hi, I'm John. I'm going to be in 'Star Wars.' If he has time, can Robert Downey Jr. mentor me?" He wasn't exactly sure that it would result in anything, but figured it was worth a shot. □

"It's Robert," the voice said. "Robert who, man?"

"Uh, Robert, Downey Jr." "I'm like, oh crap! Iron Man!" Boyega recalled. "I had better park up."

They talked for two hours that day. It was the start of a true friendship that's since resulted in more hours-long chats, hang-outs, and even a chicken and waffles date.

"Good lord we get deep," Boyega said of their conversations. "For the most part it's definitely private, but in general, his thing has always been inner peace and how to deal with this on a mental level. Taking care of your mental health is something that he talks to me about."

"He's really changed my life with his advice."

Whether it's Downey's influence or not, Boyega has been weathering the attention with expert grace — even the ugly stuff. Some dark corners of the Internet have made Boyega's race somewhat of a thing.

When the first teaser debuted last year and Boyega's face was the first thing to appear on screen, #blackstormtrooper started trending on Twitter. And it wouldn't be the last time racism would seep through the generally positive enthusiasm for the film, either. "I'm a strong individual.



Actor John Boyega poses for a photo during a promotion for the new film, "Star Wars: The Force Awakens," in Los Angeles. Boyega stars as Finn in the J.J. Abrams directed movie that opens in U.S. theaters on Dec. 18, 2015.

(Photo by Jordan Strauss/Invision/AP)

that was quite the experience."

But he still felt unsure about the future. He didn't want to burden his fellow veteran cast mates like Harrison

ing and all that."

At the time, Boyega's talent agency, CAA, also represented "Iron Man" star Robert Downey Jr., who is no stranger to this sort of

Later, Boyega remembers he was driving in London when he got a call from an unknown number.

"Who's this?" Boyega demanded.

'Carol,' 'The Big Short,' 'The Revenant' Lead Golden Globes



This photo shows Leonardo DiCaprio in a scene from the film, "The Revenant." DiCaprio was nominated for a Golden Globe award for best actor in a motion picture drama for his role in the film on Thursday, Dec. 10, 2015. The 73rd Annual Golden Globes will be held on Jan. 10, 2016. (Twentieth Century Fox via AP)

JAKE COYLE
AP Film Writer

Though the Golden Globes spread its nominations around, the Hollywood Foreign Press Association swooned hardest for Todd Haynes' 1950s romance "Carol," which landed a leading five nominations including best film drama.

In a widespread field of nominations announced Thursday in Beverly Hills, California, "Carol" solidified its growing Oscar hopes with nods for its two stars, Cate Blanchett and Rooney Mara, and for Haynes' direction. Also surging was Adam McKay's starry finance farce "The Big Short," which earned four nominations, including best picture, comedy, and nods for Steve Carell and Christian Bale.

"My co-producer Robyn Wholey called me and yelled with excitement," said McKay. "I yelled with excitement. I was half-asleep and woke up. I had an egg sandwich. That was my celebration. An egg sandwich."

With four nods is Alejandro Inarritu's follow-up to his Oscar-winning "Birdman," the frontier epic "The Revenant," which was nominated for best picture, drama, and best actor for Leonardo DiCaprio. A four-time Oscar nominee (and one-time Globe winner), DiCaprio is gunning for his first Academy Award. Tied with four is the Aar-

on Sorkin-scripted "Steve Jobs," though it failed to join the best picture nominees. Along with "Carol" and "The Revenant," they are: "Mad Max: Fury Road," "Room" and "Spotlight." Streaming series from Netflix (which led television with eight nods), Amazon and Hulu dominated the TV side of the Globes, which jumped all over the dial. Six shows tied for the most nominations: " Fargo," "Mr. Robot," "Outlander," "Transparent," "American Crime" and "Wolf Hall."

In an awards season that has so far failed to produce a definite heavyweight, Tom McCarthy's acclaimed Boston Globe drama "Spotlight" came into the Globe nominations as the Oscar favorite. While it took three top Globe nominations Thursday, including best director for McCarthy and best screenplay, its ensemble cast is failing to stand out from the pack. After the Screen Actors Guild Awards passed over Michael Keaton and Mark Ruffalo on Wednesday, the Globes did, too. Ruffalo, however, was nominated for best actor in a comedy for his performance as a bipolar father in "Infinitely Polar Bear."

"They know how good they are and recognize the work of all the other actors," McCarthy said of his cast. "The best picture nomination really speaks to that. Truthfully, I think all the nomina-

tions do. That's the wonderful thing about actors. They can take a little bit of credit all the way down the line." Most of the expected contenders came away with something to show from the Globes, including the scientific space adventure "The Martian" (including nods for star Matt Damon and director Ridley Scott), David O. Russell's matriarch portrait "Joy" (best picture, comedy and best actress Jennifer Lawrence), George Miller's apocalyptic romp "Mad Max: Fury Road" (including best director for Miller) and "Room," the Emma Donoghue novel adaptation starring Brie Larson (nominated for best actress, drama) as a captive mother. Left largely on the outside were Steven Spielberg's Cold War thriller "Bridge of Spies," which was only nominated for Mark Rylance's supporting performance; the Irish immigrant drama "Brooklyn," just nominated for Saoirse Ronan's leading performance and whose name was mangled by nominee announcer Dennis Quaid; and "Straight Outta Compton," the popular N.W.A biopic, which landed nothing the day after the SAG Awards gave it a best ensemble nomination.

Will Smith, whose upcoming "Concussion" has drawn headlines for its depiction of head trauma in football, joined the best ac-

tor, drama, nominees. Also nominated were Michael Fassbender ("Steve Jobs"), Eddie Redmayne ("The Danish Girl"), DiCaprio and Bryan Cranston ("Trumbo"). Apparently displaced was Johnny Depp's chilly Whitney Bulger in "Black Mass." Alicia Vikander, the ubiquitous star of 2015, joined the best dramatic actress field for Tom Hooper's transgender pioneer drama "The Danish Girl", as well as the supporting actress one for her performance as an artificial intelligence in the sci-fi indie "Ex Machina." Others also landed multiple nods. Rylance added a second for his TV role on the costume drama "Wolf Hall." Idris Elba also spanned both film and TV with nods for his West African rebel commander in "Beasts of No Nation," as well as the British crime series "Luther."

Though some questionable category decisions left less humorous films competing for best comedy or musical, two of comedy's top stars will crash a particularly somber awards season: Melissa McCarthy and Amy Schumer. Both were nominated for best actress in a comedy, and their films — "Spy" and "Trainwreck," respectively — will compete for best comedic film.

"Chris Rock was the first person to text me. He just wrote "Golden Globes mother-----," said Schumer. "The Hollywood Foreign

Press, man. I just want to like hug them. I want them all to sit on my face."

In the best animated film category, the Charlie Kaufman-scripted, stop-motion animated "Anomalisa" slotted in alongside a quartet of more family-friendly releases: "Inside Out," "The Good Dinosaur," "The Peanuts Movie" and "Shaun the Sheep Movie."

"We believe very strongly that animation is a medium and not a genre and it's sort of been relegated to kids movies," said Kaufman. "We don't have a lot in common with them other than the animation. But it's lovely company to be in."

Though younger stars like DiCaprio and Lawrence are the leading acting contenders, a number of esteemed veterans joined the nominations, too. Al Pacino ("Danny Collins"), Maggie Smith ("The Lady in the Van"), Lily Tomlin ("Grandma"), Jane Fonda ("Youth") and Helen Mirren ("Trumbo") all earned nods. So did Sylvester Stallone for "Creed," giving him a nomination for the same character (Rocky Balboa) who first earned him his last Globe nomination in 1976 for "Rocky." Along with Elba and Rylance, the supporting actor category was rounded out by Paul Dano ("Love & Mercy") and Michael Shannon ("99 Homes"). □